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Parliamentary History.

VOL. XXXIV.

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THE

Parliamentary History

OF

ENGLAND,

FROM

THE EARLIEST PERIOD

TO

THE YEAR

1803.

FROM WHICH LAST-MENTIONED EPOCH IT IS CONTINUED DOWNWARDS IN THE WORK ENTITLED,

"HANSARD'S PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES."

VOL. XXXIV.

COMPRISING THE PERIOD

FROM THE THIRD DAY OF DECEMBER

1798,

TO THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF MARCH,

1800.

LONDON:

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1819.

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A FEW days previous to the death of the late Sir Philip Francis, he sent for the Editor of The Parliamentary History, and obtained from him a promise, that the following Letter, with the short Notice thereto prefixed, should have a place in the present Volume. It related, he said, to a subject, upon which he was most anxious that his public character should hereafter stand on the right ground. The request was urged with much earnestness; and, in complying with it, the Editor feels that he is only doing justice to the memory of one, from whom, during the progress of his undertaking, he has been in the habit of receiving the most valuable assistance.*

J. WRIGHT.

Panton Square,
January 1, 1819.

Sir Philip Francis's constitutional principles and uniform conduct in Parliament are sufficiently known in the present times. The Parliamentary History contains ample evidence of both. On a particular subject, he has been misrepresented by a person, whose authority is likely to have weight with many, and whose writings will certainly be preserved in libraries. A fugitive answer in a newspaper, to a charge so authorized, and so prepared for preservation, though sufficient at the moment, would leave Sir Philip's reputation unprotected hereafter.

The Editor therefore thinks that he contributes to the administration of moral justice among men, by recording the following paper; with no observation, but that it was published several months before Mr. Burke's death.

For the MORNING CHRONICLE.

St. James's-square, Feb. 20, 1797.

In the 71st page of a printed Letter from Mr. Burke to the Duke of Portland, without a date, I find the following assertions:

"Some of these gentlemen who have attacked the House of Commons, lean to a "Representation of the People by the head; that is, to *individual Representation*. "*None* of them, that I recollect, except Mr. Fox, directly rejected it. It is remark- "able, however, that he only rejected it by simply declaring an opinion: he let all "the argument go against his opinion. *All* the proceedings and arguments of his

---

* To Sir Philip Francis the public are indebted for the reports of the Earl of Chatham's Speeches in the year 1770, which will be found in Vol. xvi, pp. 647, 741, and 1071. Sir Philip came into parliament in May 1784, and continued a member of the House of Commons until the dissolution in May 1796. All the principal Speeches which appear in this Work under his name, were carefully corrected by himself. His Speeches, from his return to parliament in 1802 to his final retirement in 1807, will be found recorded, under the same auspices, in THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES, which form the Continuation of this Work.

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" reforming friends lead to individual Representation, and to nothing else. It de-
" serves to be attentively observed, that this individual Representation is the *only* plan
" of their reform which has been explicitly proposed."

And in page 81, I am named as one of a phalanx, to whom not only these views, proceedings, arguments, and plans of Parliamentary Reform are imputed, but who had thought proper to treat *him* as a deserter, as if he had sworn to live and die in *our* French principles. I believe I shall sufficiently clear myself from these imputations by declaring as I do:—

1st, That, having been a Member of the Society of the Friends of the People, and having had a share in the conduct of their proceedings, I know of no Act, Order, Resolution, Proposition, Motion, or Proceeding of any kind, in that Society, in favour of individual or universal Representation.

2nd, That I am morally certain, that, if any motion to that effect had been proposed, it would have been rejected by a very great majority of the whole Society.

3rd, That, if it had been possible for such a motion to prevail, I would have quitted the Society and opposed their proceedings.

4th, That in fact a very different principle of Reform, and incompatible with that imputed to us, viz. by extending the right of voting to all householders paying parochial taxes, and stopping there, was unanimously adopted by the Society, on the 9th of April, 1794.

5th, That, on the 30th May, 1795, the Society unanimously approved of a Plan formed by me on this principle, and recommended it to the consideration of the public; and that this Plan was published in all the Newspapers.

6th, That I have, on all occasions, resisted and reprobated, to the utmost of my power, the idea of individual or universal Representation, particularly at a Meeting of the Society on the 8th of March 1794, at which I expressly treated it as *a dangerous chimera, set up on purpose to delude the lower classes of the People.*

In the House of Commons, on the 23rd of January, 1795,* the following words make part of my answer to the Attorney General:—

" With respect to universal Representation, and all the dangers and all the re-
" proaches attached to it, I must say, that I think the learned gentleman ought to be
" careful to distinguish those who profess to have such a scheme in contemplation,
" and others who reject it with a disapprobation as full and entire, though not perhaps
" with such extravagant horror, as he does. He ought to have known, that the idea
" of universal Representation was never encouraged or countenanced by any Act or
" Declaration whatever of our Association. If he knows any thing to the contrary, I
" call upon him now—I challenge him to point it out. Of *me*, in particular, he must
" have known, and, in candour, he ought to have acknowledged, that it is not possi-
" ble for any man to go farther than I have done, to reject, to resist, and to explode
" every project of that nature, and every principle and argument set up to support it;
" a project, however, so chimerical and so utterly impracticable, that it is superfluous
" to load it with charges of danger and malignity. But, let the doctrine I allude to
" be ever so mischievous and ever so dangerous, is it in fact—is it in truth, the real
" object of all the apprehensions and terrors, which are said to be excited by it?—I do
" not believe it; I do not believe that the enemies of Reform are so much terrified by
" it as they pretend to be. They know, as well as I do, that it is nothing but a vision,
" which can never be substantiated—a mere abstraction, which can never be realised.
" No, Sir; whatever they may pretend, this is not the true ground of their uneasiness.
" It is the reasonable, the moderate, the practicable plan, which really fills them with
" terror and anxiety. That, perhaps, might be accomplished, the other never can;
" nor, if it were even to obtain for a moment, could it possibly subsist; and I am
" convinced, that, if it were possible to drive those persons to an option, they would
" prefer the worst to the best; because they would foresee, that the mischiefs inevita-
" ble in the execution of such a scheme, or even in the attempt, would determine

* See Vol. 31, p. 1164.

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" every reasonable man in the country to revert and submit to the present system; " that is, to suffer the Constitution to languish and dissolve in its corruption, or gra- " dually to perish by decay, rather than to encounter the direct and positive dangers " of a change so violent and extreme, to which their minds would naturally unite the " certainty of instant destruction."

In my Speech on the Slave Trade, on the 11th of April 1796, there is the following passage:—

" In the lowest situations of life the People know as well as we do, that wherever " personal industry is encouraged, and property protected, there must be inequalities " of possession, and consequently distinction of ranks. Then come the form and the " order, by which the substance is at once defined and preserved. Distribution and " Limitation prevent confusion, and Government by orders is the natural result of " property protected by Freedom. Take care that you adhere to it. Where the few " possess all, and the multitude have nothing, there is no Government by orders. " Every thing is in extremity, and nothing in gradation."*

Whether these are French principles or not, I neither know nor care. I assert that they are mine.

PHILIP FRANCIS.

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* See Vol. 32, p. 961.

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ARCHBISHOPS.

1783.	Archbishop of Canterbury	John Moore.
1779.	- - - - - - - - York	William Markham.

BISHOPS.

1796.	Bishop of St. Asaph	Lewis Bagot.
1783.	- - - - - Bangor	John Warren.
1774.	- - - - - Bath and Wells	Charles Moss.
1797.	- - - - - Bristol	F. H. W. Cornwall.
1797.	- - - - - Chichester	Charles Buckner.
1781.	- - - - - Coventry and Litchfield	Hon. James Cornwallis.
1793.	- - - - - St. David's	Hon. William Stuart.
1781.	- - - - - Ely	Hon. James Yorke.
1797.	- - - - - Exeter	Henry Reginald Courtenay.
1789.	- - - - - Gloucester	Richard Beadon.
1788.	- - - - - Hereford	John Butler.
1782.	- - - - - Landaff	Richard Watson.
1787.	- - - - - Lincoln	George Prettyman Tomline.
1787.	- - - - - London	Beilby Porteus.
1792.	- - - - - Norwich	Charles Manners Sutton.
1799.	- - - - - Oxford	John Randolph.

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1794. Bishop of Peterborough ..... Spencer Madan.
1793. - - - - - Rochester ..... Samuel Horsley.
1791. - - - - - Salisbury ..... John Douglas.
1781. - - - - - Winchester ..... Brownlow North.
1781. - - - - - Worcester ..... Richard Hurd.
1791. - - - - - Carlisle ..... Hon. Edward Vernon.
1781. - - - - - Chester ..... William Cleaver.
1791 - - - - - Durham .... Hon. Shute Barrington.

LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR.

1793. Jan. 28. Alexander, Lord Loughborough. In 1801, created Earl of Rosslyn.

LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL.

1796. Sept. 24. John, Earl of Chatham.

LORD PRIVY SEAL.

1798. Feb. 14. John, Earl of Westmorland.

PRINCIPAL SECRETARIES OF STATE.

Home Department.

1794. July 11. William Henry, Duke of Portland.

Foreign Department.

1791. May Lord Grenville.

War Department.

1794. July Right Hon. Henry Dundas.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

1789. May 8. The Right Hon. Henry Addington.

COMMISSIONERS FOR EXECUTING THE OFFICE OF LORD HIGH TREASURER OF GREAT BRITAIN.

1797. July Right Hon. William Pitt; and Chancellor of the Exchequer.
Hon. John Thomas Townshend.
John Smyth, esq.
Right Hon. Sylvester Douglas.
Charles Small Pybus, esq.

MASTER OF THE ROLLS.

1788. June 7. Sir Richard Pepper Arden, knt., afterwards Lord Alvanley.

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ATTORNEYS GENERAL.

1793	Feb. 13.	Sir John Scott, knt. In July 1799 created Lord Eldon.
1799.		Sir John Mitford, knt., afterwards Lord Redesdale.

SOLICITORS GENERAL.

1793.	Feb. 13.	Sir John Mitford, knt.
1779.		Sir William Grant, knt.

LORD ADVOCATE OF SCOTLAND.

1789.	Robert Dundas, esq.

SECRETARY AT WAR.

1794.	Right Hon. William Windham.

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ERRATA.

Page 130, Line 14, *for* Boudon *read* Burdon.
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39 GEORGE THE THIRD, A. D. 1798.

THIRD SESSION
OF THE
EIGHTEENTH PARLIAMENT
OF
GREAT BRITAIN.

[*Continued from Vol. XXXIII.*]

DEBATE on Mr. Pitt's Proposition for a Tax upon Income.] December 3, 1798. The House having resolved itself into a committee of Ways and Means, Mr. Pitt moved, that the act of the 38th of his present majesty, chap. 16, for granting an aid or contribution to his majesty, might be read, and that it might be an instruction to the committee to consider of the said act; which being agreed to,

Mr. Pitt addressed the committee as follows: Before I proceed to submit to the committee the very important matters which form the subject of this day's consideration, I conceive it necessary to state the amount of the total services of the present year, and of the ways and means applicable to those services. The total sum voted for the ordinaries and extraordinaries of the navy and transport services amounts to 13,642,000*l.* being the same sum, within a very small amount, as was granted last session. The next head of expense is the army, the estimates of which amount to 8,840,000*l.* The extraordinaries, to be incurred in 1798, were stated at 3,200,000*l.* There was also a vote of credit for one million, applicable to unforeseen expenses. This vote of credit will cover all the extraordinary expenses to the end of the year. But with respect to the vote of credit for this year, one million will be wanted to discharge that amount issued in exchequer bills. Under the article, then, of army expenditure, there remain the extraordinary services of the year 1799, which I may put at two millions. Thus the total amount, under the head of army will be 8,840,000*l.* including the one million for the discharge of exchequer bills issued, and two millions for the extraordinary services of 1799. Under the head of ordnance services there has been voted 1,570,000*l.* The above sums, with the addition of the miscellaneous services, swell the total of the supply to 29,272,000*l.*

Towards raising this supply the same resources will be applicable as are applicable at all periods, whether of peace or of war. The land and malt have always been taken at 2,750,000*l.* There remains the lottery, 200,000*l.* and the growing produce of the consolidated fund, which I take at 1,500,000*l.* In addition to this, a tax was laid in the last session upon the exports and imports founded upon the peculiar situation of our trade, as it then stood. That tax has not only yielded to the full amount of what I estimated it at, but has even exceeded it. That duty I estimate at 1,700,000*l.* The above articles form a total of 6,150,000*l.* The remainder must be raised either by a tax within the year, in the same manner as the assessed tax bill of last year, or by a loan. The sum to be provided for is upwards of 23 millions. Gentlemen will recollect, that, in the debates upon the subject of the assessed taxes last session, two fundamental principles were established as the rule by which we should be guided in providing for the supplies for the service of the year. These were, first, to reduce the total amount to be at pre-

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sent raised by a loan; and next, as far as it was not reducible, to reduce it to such a limit, that no more loan should be raised than a temporary tax should defray within a limited time. In the first place, the tax acceded to by the House last session was for the purpose of providing for the supplies of the year; and in the next place, for the purpose of extinguishing the loan raised in that year. From the modifications, however, which that measure underwent, the produce was considerably diminished. Other means, indeed, were adopted to remedy the deficiency thus occasioned. The voluntary and cheerful efforts which, so honourably to the country, came in aid of the deficit of the assessed taxes, and the produce of the exports and imports beyond the estimate, brought the amount of the sums raised to that at which they had been calculated. The different articles were estimated at 7½ millions, and this sum is fully covered by the actual receipt under the different heads. The produce of the assessed taxes, under all the modifications, and all the tricks and evasions, is yet four millions. I had taken it at four and a half after the modifications were adopted. This deficiency is supplied by the excess on the head of voluntary contributions. Instead of 1,500,000*l.* the voluntary contributions already exceed two millions; and the sum of 7½ millions for which credit was taken, has been effective to the public service.

Satisfactory as it must be to review the circumstances to which we owe these advantages, and the benefits which the mode of raising the supplies to a considerable extent adopted last session has produced, it is unnecessary for me to state, that, however the principle may deserve our approbation, it is much to be desired that its effects should be more extensive, and its application more efficient. By the causes to which I have alluded, the full advantage of the principle has not been obtained. The wishes and the interest of individuals, I am sure, must unite in demanding a more comprehensive, a more equal and a more vigorous application of a principle, the rare advantages of which we have been able to ascertain, if we have not yet been so fortunate as to enjoy. Last session those who acknowledged the importance of the principle of raising a considerable part of the supplies within the year, confined their objections to the proportion fixed upon the scale of the assessed taxes, as unequal in its application, and liable to great evasion in practice. Though not insensible of the weight of the objection, I then felt it my duty, convinced as I was of the immense advantages of the system to adopt some visible criterion by which to estimate and to regulate the extent of contribution, if it was not possible to devise means of embracing fully every class of property, and every source of contribution. I felt it materially important to follow some durable, some apparent and sensible criterion, by which to apportion the burthen. At the same time I felt, that although the assessed taxes furnished the most comprehensive and efficient scale of contribution, there necessarily must be much income, much wealth, great means, which were not included in its application. It now appears that not by any error in the calculation of our resources, not by any exaggeration of our wealth, but by the general facility of modification, by the anxiety to render the measure as little oppressive as possible, a defalcation has arisen which ought not to have taken place. Yet, under the disadvantage and imperfections of an unequal and inadequate scale of application, the effects of the measure have tended to confirm our estimates of its benefits, and to encourage us to persevere in its principle. Every circumstance in our situation, every event in the retrospect of our affairs, demonstrates the advantages of the system of raising a considerable part of the supplies within the year, and ought to induce us to enforce it more effectually to prevent those frauds, which an imperfect criterion and a loose facility of modification have introduced; to repress those evasions so disgraceful to the country, so injurious to those who honourably discharge their equal contribution, and, above all, so detrimental to the great object of national advantage which it is intended to promote. In these sentiments, our leading principle should be to guard against all evasion, to endeavour by a fair and strict application, to realize that full tenth, which it was the original purpose of the measure of the assessed taxes to obtain, and to extend this as far as possible in every direction, till it may be necessary clearly to mark the modification, or to renounce, in certain instances, the application of it altogether. If, then, the committee assent to this principle, they must feel the necessity of following it up, by more efficient provisions. They will

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perceive the necessity of obtaining a more specific statement of income than the loose scale of modification, which, under the former measure, permitted such fraud and evasion. If such a provision be requisite to correct the abuses of collection, to obviate the artifices of dishonesty, to extend the utility of the whole system, it will be found that many of the regulations of the old measure will be adapted to a more comprehensive and efficient application of the principle. If regulations can be devised to prevent an undue abatement, and to proportion the burthen to the real ability, means must be employed to reach those resources which it is impossible under the present system of the assessed taxes to touch. Experience proves that we must correct and remedy, in order to secure the advantages which the measure is calculated to afford. It is in our power to make them our own. I think I can show that whatever benefit the principle upon which we have begun to act, is fitted to bestow, may by a liberal, fair, and efficient application, be carried to an extent far greater than has yet been obtained, an extent equal to every object of great and magnanimous effort, to every purpose of national safety and glory, to every advantage of permanent credit and of increased prosperity.

Impressed, then, with the importance of the subject, convinced that we ought, as far as possible, to prevent all evasion and fraud, it remains for us to consider, by what means these defects may be redressed, by what means a more equal scale of contribution can be applied, and a more extensive effect obtained. For this purpose it is my intention to propose, that the presumption founded upon the assessed taxes shall be laid aside, and that a general tax shall be imposed upon all the leading branches of income. No scale of income indeed which can be devised will be perfectly free from the objection of inequality, or entirely cut off the possibility of evasion. All that can be attempted is, to approach as near as circumstances will permit to a fair and equal contribution. I trust that the opinion of the country will concur with the disposition of parliament to give that energy to our exertions, to give that stability to our resources, which our present situation and our future prosperity demand. I trust that all who value the national honour and the national safety, will cooperate in the desirable purpose of obtaining by an efficient and comprehensive tax upon real ability, every advantage which flourishing and invigorated resources can confer upon national efforts. The details of a measure which attempts an end so great and important, must necessarily require mature deliberation. At present all that I can pretend to do is, to lay before the committee an outline of a plan which endeavours to combine every thing at which such a measure ought to aim. This outline I shall now proceed to develope to the committee as clearly and distinctly as I am able.

It will occur to every one to inquire what species of commissioners shall be vested with the power of fixing the rate of assessment under a measure which must leave a considerable discretionary power. In such commissioners several qualifications are in a particular manner desirable. They ought to be persons of a respectable situation in life; as far as possible removed from any suspicion of partiality, or any kind of undue influence; men of integrity and independence. From the experience we have had of the benefits derived from the voluntary exertions of such a body of commissioners, we may be able to ascertain in what classes to look for men qualified for the important functions which the office would impose. Still, however, I should consider it necessary to vary somewhat from the mode pursued in forming the commissioners of the land tax. After much consideration, it occurs to me that, out of the commissioners appointed under the act for assessing the land-tax, a certain proportion should be taken with given qualifications; and that no man should be admitted to act as commissioner for the purposes to be afterwards specified, who does not possess 300*l.* per annum. To these, other persons of similar qualifications should be added, and the list so framed should be referred to the grand jury, or those who have served on the two last grand juries to form the commissioners. In case the party is dissatisfied with the decision of these commissioners, another body of commissioners should be formed, to whom an appeal may be carried. In commercial towns some special provisions will be necessary, adapted to the nature of circumstances.

The next point for consideration, is the mode of contribution which shall be adopted. On this head it is my intention to propose, that no income under 60*l.* a year

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shall be called upon to contribute, and that the scale of modification up to 200*l.* a year, as in the assessed taxes, shall be introduced with restriction. The quota which will then be called for ought to amount to a full tenth of the contributor's income. The mode proposed of obtaining this contribution differs from that pursued in the assessed taxes, as instead of trebling their amount, the statement of income is to proceed from the party himself. In doing this it is not proposed that income shall be distinctly laid open, but it shall only be declared that the assessment is beyond the proportion of a tenth of the income of the person on whom it is imposed. In this way, the disclosure at which many may revolt will be avoided, and at the same time every man will be under the necessity of contributing his fair and equal proportion. How then it will be asked, is evasion and fraud to be checked? Knowing the difficulty of guessing what a man's real ability is, I do not think that the charge of fixing what is to be the rate, ought to be left to the commissioners. It would, I am persuaded, be most acceptable to the general feeling, to make it the duty of a particular officer, as surveyor, to lay before the commissioners such grounds of doubt, as may occur to him on the fairness of the rate at which a party may have assessed himself. These doubts, and the reasons on which they are founded, are then to be transmitted by the surveyor to the commissioners, in order that they may call for farther explanation from the person concerned. When in the case of the assessed taxes we have had so much experience of the evasions which have taken place; when we see the consequences which have resulted from a vague rule of exemption, and an indefinite principle of deduction: when we see that, by the different modes by which exemptions were regulated, persons, who probably would have shrunk from a direct fraud, have been able by different pretences to disguise the fair and adequate proportion which they ought to have contributed, it becomes more than ever necessary to render every case of exemption precise, and to guard every title to deduction from the danger of being abused. At the same time, under every disadvantage of the unrestricted application of deduction, and the easy commission of fraud, we have yet ample proof of our national wealth and general honesty. To prevent the country from suffering by dishonesty, to prevent the willing contributor from being taxed to the utmost proportion of his means, while his wealthy neighbour owes his exemption to meanness, it is necessary to guard with greater strictness against every chance of evasion. When doubts are entertained that a false statement has been given, it shall be competent for the commissioners to call for a specification of income. It will be necessary to simplify and to state with precision the different proportions of income arising from land, from trade, annuity, or profession, which shall entitle to deduction. The commissioners are then to say whether they are satisfied with the statement which has been given. The officer or surveyor is to be allowed to examine and to report whether there appears reason to believe that the assessment is adequate. When the day of examination arrives, the commissioners shall hear what the surveyor and the party have to allege in support of the objection and the assessment, and examine other individuals. The schedule, which shall be drawn up in such a manner as accurately to define every case of exemption or deduction, shall be presented by the party, with his claim clearly specified. To the truth of the schedule he shall make oath. The party, however, shall not be compelled to answer; his books shall not be called for, nor his confidential clerks or agents examined. If, however, he declines to submit to the investigation of his books, and the examination of his clerks, and other means of ascertaining the truth, it shall be competent for the commissioners to fix the assessment, and their decision shall be final, unless he appeals to the higher commissioner. No disclosure is compulsory; but if the party is unwilling to disclose, he must acquiesce in the decision of the commissioners, who shall not be authorized to relieve without a full disclosure.

This, I am perfectly ready to admit, gives to the commissioners considerable power; but I think I have stated enough to show to the committee, that, unless some such powers be afforded under this act, the real and substantial effect of the measure will be entirely defeated. I think, too, I have proved, that commissioners, selected in the manner I have described, are as likely to be as free from all undue influence, and to act with as much integrity and honour, as any other set of men whatever. If, however, a better mode

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should be suggested, so far from opposing it, I shall consider it as a melioration and improvement of my plan. With respect to the information which may be communicated to the commissioners, I should propose that they shall be strictly sworn not to disclose such information, nor to avail themselves of it for any other purpose separate from the execution of the act. If any statement, however, should be made upon oath, which the commissioners shall think to be false, and which they may wish to bring to a trial, it must be obvious to the committee that then there ought to be afforded the means of carrying on a prosecution for perjury. But on no other ground should there be any disclosure of facts by the commissioners, or any of the other officers appointed to carry the act into execution.

Having laid down these general principles and outlines, I cannot feel, that if commissioners of the description I have alluded to can be found, bound to execute their duty fairly and impartially, and sworn to secrecy—I say, if such men can be selected, I cannot feel, however strong the objections may be against the disclosure of circumstances, that any statement made to such commissioners is liable to the general objection against public disclosures of the incomes and circumstances of individuals in a commercial country; at least, I am sure there is every disposition in the plan to guard against it. There is little danger, I conceive, that such commissioners will act partially, or conduct themselves vexatiously; and, in my opinion, there does not remain any fair ground for jealousy in individuals, that a disclosure to such men will give to persons in the same line of life any advantages over them.—Perhaps, however, Sir, there is once class of men to whom it may be for the committee to determine whether they ought not to remain exceptions to the act. Among the descriptions of persons to whom it may remain for the committee to consider whether a disclosure would not be detrimental, is the class which includes the poorest persons engaged in mercantile concerns; a class whose gains are most precarious, whose credit may be most doubtful, and most injured by a disclosure—I speak of the persons engaged in retail trades, to whom the assessed tax bill of last session gave great indulgencies, considering that the relief of abatement was one of which they could not avail themselves, without greater inconvenience and injury to them, perhaps, than to a higher description of mercantile traders. I wish, therefore, the committee to consider whether it may not be as well to leave that class to pay on the mitigated rate of assessment to which they are liable under the assessed tax bill, as to subject them to the general rate of the present bill. It will also naturally enter into the consideration of the committee, what allowances or exemptions ought to be extended to other descriptions of persons. In the last act, certain allowances and abatements were granted to persons with large families. That principle it will certainly be proper to extend to this measure; and the only doubt which I entertain upon the subject is, whether it was carried far enough in the bill of last year. If this suggestion be admitted, it will naturally be a matter of doubt, whether the principle in the last bill, with respect to persons having no families, ought not to be extended. It will also very reasonably occur to the minds of the committee, that it is of the utmost importance to the due execution of the act, that, as far as the general principles can be laid down for establishing a rate of landed property, or what may be the proper average of incomes which are subject to average, the rates in the last act should be subject to correction and improvement. By the operation of these powers, and by the influence of these rules, we may expect to arrive more nearly at that fair proportion which each man ought to contribute towards the exigencies of the country.

The next consideration is one liable to more difficulty and doubt, upon which gentlemen will be aware that every thing must be conjectural, but in which we are still not without lights to guide us—I mean as to the probable amount of a tax of this kind. The committee must be convinced, that what I shall state will be with doubt and uncertainty. I shall, however, submit to the view of the House the information I have collected, the authorities with which I am fortified, and the grounds upon which I proceed. And first, Sir, I shall proceed to state what is the first great object of income. I mean the property derived from land. Upon this point I have consulted the best opinions, and authors of the most acknowledged merit. Upon the subject of the rent of the land of this country, sir William Petty is the earliest author I have consulted. At the time he wrote, the

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rent of land was stated at eight millions. In a subsequent period, in the beginning of this century, and in the reign of queen Anne, two writers of credit, Davenant and King, represented the rental of the land to be 14,000,000*l*. However they differed on other points, on this they both agreed. Posterior to that time it was a received opinion, that a land-tax of four shillings in the pound was equivalent to about two shillings of what would be collected on the real rents of the kingdom, which were stated to amount to twenty millions. Full twenty years ago this was said by a writer, who was also a member of this House, and who in a work he wrote, expressly recommended the very principle which I have submitted to the committee this day. The same estimate was stated, and the same opinion was countenanced, by the celebrated author of the Wealth of Nations, Adam Smith. He received it as a statement generally admitted, and sufficiently proved, that the rent of the land in the kingdom was twenty millions yearly. In a work published as long ago as the year 1774, Mr. Arthur Young, who had made agricultural pursuits his study, advanced the same opinion. I mention all these authorities, to show what has been supposed to be the amount of the rental of the land at different periods. I have also had the advantage of other inquiries made expressly by a body who have made the cultivation of the land their peculiar province—I mean the Board of Agriculture. I allude more particularly to one report published by a person who made this part of the subject his study, the report drawn up by Mr. Middleton. All these, checked with other examinations, state the cultivated land of the country to amount to little less than forty millions of acres. Any attempt to state what is the average value of these forty millions of acres, must be extremely uncertain. Many persons most conversant on the subject believe the average value to be fifteen shillings per acre. I shall, however, take it at no more than twelve shillings and six-pence. I will put the average value at twenty-five millions a year. And gentlemen will see, that when I take the number of acres at forty millions, and the average value at only twelve shillings and six-pence per acre, the result is only an increase of five millions beyond what it was twenty years ago, and that therefore I cannot be considered as a sanguine calculator. However, in this part of the subject, I desire the committee to bear in mind, that it will be proper to propose a reduction for all under 60*l*. a year, and that the same modifications be admitted into this act as in the Assessed Tax bill—I mean the scale of income from 60*l*. to 200*l*. a year, and rising from a 120th part to a tenth. I mean on this account to assume a deduction of one fifth, and to state the taxable property at only twenty millions.

I shall next proceed to state that part of income from land which belongs to the tenant. I propose to value every man according to his rent, making only a deduction for repairs. What I shall suggest for the further consideration of the committee, is three-fourths of the rack rent which the tenant pays to the landlord. The value of the income from land which belongs to the tenant I take at nineteen millions; the income to the landlord at twenty-five millions. Instead of deducting only one-fifth, as I have suggested with respect to the landlord, I shall propose with respect to the tenant, to deduct two-thirds, leaving five millions as the taxable property of the tenants. The next income arising from land, is an income which is received neither by the landlord, nor by the tenant,—I mean what is received from tithes. This is an income enjoyed, either by lay impropriators, or by the clergy. The statements of the amount of the tithes are different; but I estimate the value of them to be five millions. If gentlemen suppose the amount of the cultivated land in the country to be forty millions of acres, and the average value to be twenty-five millions, they will find my valuation to be very moderate: it is also Mr. Arthur Young's statement. Upon this subject of tithes, I propose to allow a deduction of one-fifth, though perhaps I may be considered as stating the reduction too largely; but gentlemen will consider the allowance to be made for poor livings—Another species of property is that which arises from mines, and from shares in canals. There is also another property which I have not included in the rents of land, I mean the property arising from the sale of timber. I take all these three, the mines, canals, and timber, at three millions. Another species of rent is that received for houses. I propose to proceed upon the rate which was followed in the act of last session. To establish accurately the rent of houses has ever been found impracticable, particularly of houses of the higher description of rent,

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which have always been undervalued. Out of 700,000 houses, 250,000 are calculated to pay to the assessed taxes; I shall therefore take the rent of houses at no more than six millions. In the early statements to which I have alluded, the profits gained by the professors of the law alone are estimated at one million and a half; I cannot suppose that they are at all diminished. Allowing, besides, for all the branches of the medical profession, I conceive that two millions is a very small sum as the amount of the incomes arising from the professions.

The next head of income relates to the profits of retail trade: but there are persons of a certain description, with respect to whom it will be necessary to make some allowance. The reduction I shall propose to take at one-eighth of the nett sum of the profits of the trade of Great Britain, after which there will remain a sum of 5,000,000*l.* applicable to the general operation of the tax. There will then remain another article of taxation, which is the income spent in this country by persons who derive it from other parts of the world; and unquestionably all who reside in this kingdom, and draw their means from sources out of it, cannot be dissatisfied at contributing to their own support and protection. Of this description, the only persons I shall think it necessary to estimate are those whose incomes arise from their having property in Ireland, and who reside in this country, and persons owning estates in the West Indies, or receiving the interest of mortgages on estates in that part of the world. With respect to those persons whose incomes arise from Ireland, I believe it is the generally received opinion, that the property of persons of this description amounted to at least 1,000,000*l.*, a considerable time since, and now, from the increase of rents, it may reasonably be estimated far beyond that sum. With respect to the incomes of estates in the West Indies, the total amount cannot be estimated at less than 7,000,000*l.* sterling, and far the greater amount is produced from the property of persons residing in Great Britain, who either own estates, or have mortgages upon them for which they receive interest. From that are to be deducted the amount of the exports carried out, and the charge of cultivating the estates in the West Indies; after which deduction, I estimate the produce of income in the West Indies at four millions. Thus I think I may fairly estimate at five millions the whole produce of income arising beyond seas, and enjoyed by persons in this country.

The next description of property is the income of persons not in trade. Under this head will be included annuities of all kinds, public and private mortgages, and income arising from money lent upon securities under various denominations. At the same time the committee will go along with me in seeing that, in estimating the general rental of the land of England, I have taken it with all its burthens, and consequently have included the mortgages. In the practical detail of the measure, it will come to be decided whether it shall fall on the land owner, or on the mortgagee. In respect, therefore, of this description of property, I do not now make any distinct estimate. With respect to private annuities of another kind, it is also difficult to ascertain their amount. Not so with regard to public annuities; we have no difficulty in ascertaining the exact amount of the annuities paid by the public to individuals, and I shall have no hesitation in submitting to the committee, that when a general assessment upon income is to take place, no distinction ought to be made as to the sources from which that income may arise. There can be no fair objection taken by the stockholder upon the occasion; there can be no question of a breach of good faith with the public creditor, by thus imposing upon him what every other subject of the realm is to incur. The public creditor enjoys his security under the most sacred obligations of the state, and whenever an idea has been started of imposing upon the stockholders, separately and distinctly, any sort of tax, I have reprobated the attempt, as utterly inconsistent with the good faith of public engagement. Parliament has always gone along with me in the feeling that no such tax ought to be levied upon them, and they have uniformly acted upon this feeling, on the principle, that, as the public creditors came forward and lent their money to the state in the moment of its necessity, while at the same time they bore, in common with every other description of his majesty's subjects, the taxes on consumption, they were to be secured against any imposts, distinctly levelled at them as annuitants of the public; and the parliament has felt this more particularly from the recollection of the duty which they owe to persons who had embarked so

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much, and identified themselves so intimately with the state. Against any direct tax upon the stockholder, then, I am sure the committee would set themselves in opposition; but the matter is materially reversed, when a tax is to be levied upon the income of every description of persons in the realm; when it is no longer in the power of the stockholder to say, I could avoid this tax by removing my property from the funds to landed security, or to trade; every argument against including him in the assessment is withdrawn. The protection yielded to the stockholder, is the same as to the landholder, the merchant, and the manufacturer. The duty, therefore, is the same, and every other description of persons in the country would have a right to complain, if, when they are called upon for a sacrifice of this extraordinary nature, so numerous a body of persons were to be exempted from the assessment. I am confident, therefore, that every gentleman who hears me, will agree that the principle of the measure is not liable to any imputation of breach of faith. It cannot be called a resumption of the annuity that has been granted to the public creditors, nor an infringement of the contract that was originally made with them. They are, in this instance, only to do that which every other body of men in the kingdom are to do; they are to make a sacrifice of part of their income to the necessities of the state, upon the principle of giving security to all which they possess. I should say to the stockholder, as one of the public, "if you expect from the state the protection which is common to us all, you ought also to make the sacrifice which we are called upon to make. It is not peculiar to you; it does not belong to the quality of your income; but it is made general, and required from all; you could not embark your capital in any other species of security in which it would not be subject to the same charge." I do not know what objection the stockholder could make to this appeal. I include, therefore, the public annuitants in the view of the proposed tax, and there is no difficulty in estimating the amount of this species of income. At the same time, it is to be taken into consideration, that all that part of the public annuities which have been redeemed by the nation, is to be exempted from the charge of the tax. Taking the amount of the redemption, therefore, at what it now appears to be, the rental of the public annuitants may be estimated at 15,000,000*l.*; but here, as in all the other cases, both of the land and rental, and of other sources of property, there will, of course, be admitted the same exemptions to all annuitants who have less than 60*l.* a year, and the same modifications to all who possess from 60*l.* to 200*l.* a year. At the same time it is to be considered, that these exemptions and modifications are only to apply to those individuals whose whole income amounts to less than 200*l.* a year. If persons possess incomes from various sources, they are to be calculated in the aggregate; for the exemption or the modification will not apply, if the whole income should not be under the stipulated sum. I am sure, that I shall over-rate the amount of these exemptions and modifications, when I deduct one-fifth from the sum that I have stated the public annuities to be; but I do not admit that deduction, and therefore state the total of the income from the public funds at 12,000,000*l.*

There now remain the other great sources of trade to the inhabitants of this country;—the produce of trade, foreign and domestic: and this branch of income is, in its nature, more difficult of estimate than any other. We have, however, lights and aids by which we may come to a knowledge of a material part, at least, of this source of national wealth, I mean the produce of our foreign trade. The capital employed in this way is certainly not less than 80,000,000*l.* sterling. Assuming this as the capital, the next question is, what we ought to take as the profit to all the description of persons employed in carrying on this branch of our trade? In estimating this, we must necessarily include in our view, not merely the merchant who exports, but all the orders and descriptions of persons from the manufacturer upwards, who are in any way connected with our export trade. Under this head come in the profits of brokerage, wharfage, and carriage, with all the other contributory trades connected with foreign commerce; and I am sure I make a moderate calculation, when I estimate the average of the profits upon the capital of 80,000,000*l.* at 15 per cent. I take, therefore, 12,000,000*l.* as the income of all the persons connected with the foreign trade of this kingdom.

There now remains that which more than any other branch of our income baffles the power of scrutiny, and affords even very

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limited grounds for conjecture: I mean the profits arising from domestic trade and manufacture. Here the many descriptions of persons whose skill and industry are the source of income in all the progress of our arts and manufactures, from the first preparation of the rude and raw material to its state of perfection, serve to make calculation almost impossible from their variety and extent. Even here, however, we have some means of forming an idea. Of the general capital of 80,000,000*l.* employed in the foreign trade, it has been pretty accurately determined, that about 30,000,000*l.* are destined and employed in the export of the leading manufactures of England. I am sure, then, that the committee will go along with me in saying, that the amount of the capital and sum employed in internal trade must be four times the amount of our export of British manufactures. When we look at the vast machine of trade in all its parts, let any gentleman ask himself whether, in the woollen manufactures, cotton, linen, hardware, pottery, and in all the other great and leading branches of manufacture, there can be a less sum employed than four times the amount of that which is appropriated by the merchant for the purposes of exportation? Viewing all the enormous capital invested in domestic manufacture, I cannot take it at less than 120,000,000*l.* and upon this capital I estimate the gain at no more than 15 per cent, making a sum of 18,000,000*l.* per annum of income.—There is one other description of income which, though it embraces a vast variety of individuals, is reducible to none of the former heads, but comes naturally to be included in the article of domestic trade; I mean artisans, architects, brewers, distillers, builders, brickmakers, masons, carpenters, and all that innumerable class of persons who, by skill in their professions, draw their incomes from the general prosperity of the country. The committee will at once perceive how numerous and how varied this class of persons must be, and how impossible it is to arrive at an accurate criterion of the general amount of their gains. I am sure, however, they will agree with me that I understate it, when I take it at 10,000,000*l.* per annum. I thus estimate the whole amount of our internal manufactures and trade at 28,000,000*l.* a year.

I have thus rapidly gone through all the distinct branches of national rental, and of national profits, from which we have to derive the tax that I mean to propose to you. I have through the whole, been anxious to understate the amount of the estimate, and to overrate the exemptions and deductions that it would be necessary to make from each. I make the whole annual rental and profits, after making the deductions which I think reasonable, 102,000,000*l.* sterling. For the sake of greater clearness, I will recapitulate the several heads:

	£.
Land rental, after deducting one-fifth	20,000,000
Tenant's rental of land, deducting two-thirds of the rack rent	6,000,000
Tythes, deducting one-fifth	4,000,000
Mines, canal-navigation, &c. deducting one-fifth	3,000,000
Rental of houses, deducting one-fifth	5,000,000
Profits of professions	2,000,000
Rental of Scotland, taking it at one-eighth of that of England	5,000,000
Income of persons resident in Great Britain, drawn from possessions beyond seas	5,000,000
Annuities from the public funds, after deducting one-fifth for exemptions and modifications	12,000,000
Profits on the capital employed in our foreign commerce	12,000,000
Profits on the capital employed in domestic trade, and the profits of skill and industry	28,000,000
In all	£102,000,000

Upon this sum a tax of 10 per cent is likely to produce 10,000,000*l.* a year, and this is the sum at which I shall assume it. Now, supposing that ten millions is the sum thus collected, gentlemen will recollect that, in the last session of parliament, the assessed taxes were the only part of the public resources which were mortgaged for the sum of 8,000,000*l.* borrowed for the public service in 1797. I should think, therefore, that the sum now proposed to be raised in lieu of the assessed taxes, should, after its appropriation to the supplies of the present year, remain as a pledge for the discharge of that sum for which the assessed taxes were a security, and also for the discharge of the loan of the present year, beyond what will be paid out of the sinking fund. Taking the assessed taxes at four millions, they would have been mortgaged for two years after peace;—and thus the advantage of this measure is this, that no greater sums will be raised on any individuals than those which have been hitherto paid, at

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least by such as have rendered the measure of the legislature effectual; they will be relieved of a greater than a proportional share of their burthen, and the duration of the burthen will not be half the time. But it does not stop here; it looks anxiously to the alleviation of the burthens of the country, by a great temporary exertion; it looks to the equality of the tax, and the generalefficacy of the measure, conscious that on them depends our success in the great cause in which we are engaged.—In the mode of applying the sum now to be raised, there are different ways. The sum which the assessed taxes were applied to discharge amounted last year to eight millions; it would be only to borrow a sum equal to the debt to supply the deficiency; but it occurs to me, that a more simple and direct mode is, to apply this sum, in the first instance, to the supplies of the year, but at the same time to enact, that the tax shall continue till it has discharged the debt for which the assessed taxes were mortgaged, and then to make a farther charge for what may be borrowed beyond what the sinking fund will discharge. Supposing this ten per cent on income produces 10,000,000*l.* the period when I should propose it to take effect would be the 5th of April next. I should propose the repeal of the former assessed taxes at the same period; but from the calculation I have made 4½ millions will be raised from the 1st Feb. 1798, to the 1st Feb. 1799. It would, therefore, be more beneficial to commence the operation of this new measure at an earlier period, because of the benefit of the increased rate of taxation; but there will be the addition of what will come in under the assessed taxes, which will amount to 700,000*l.* Thus there will be raised 10,700,000*l.* But this is not applicable to the whole of the subject; for gentlemen will recollect, that the interest of the 8,000,000*l.* was also charged on the assessed taxes. The interest will continue in the course of the present year, to which also is to be added the interest of whatever loan may be made this year. This will amount to about 1,500,000*l.*, which leaves the sum of 9,200,000*l.* as applicable to the services of the present year. This aid would be all that is necessary to furnish the ways and means for the supplies, except as to the sum of 24 millions: 14 millions, therefore, is the sum necessary to be raised by loan, of which, however, 4½ millions is discharged by the operation of the sinking fund, consequently 9½ millions is the whole sum to be added to the national debt. I wish, therefore to lay this down as a principle, that 9½ millions is the sum to be raised this year, for which I should propose to charge as a mortgage the income tax, after discharging the former mortgage. After enlarging upon the benefits likely to result from the measure of raising a considerable portion of the supplies within the year, the right hon. gentleman concluded with moving the following Resolutions:

1. "That it is the opinion of this committee, that so much of an act made in the last session of parliament, intituled, 'An Act for 'granting to his Majesty an Aid and Contri-'bution for the Prosecution of the War,' as charges any person with an additional duty in proportion to the amount of the rates or duties to which, prior to the 5th day of April, 1798, such person was assessed, according to any assessment made in pursuance of any act of parliament in force at the time of passing the said act of the last session, be repealed.

2. "That it is the opinion of this committee, that, towards raising the supply granted to his majesty, there be charged annually, during a term to be limited, the several rates and duties following, upon all income arising from property in Great Britain, belonging to any of his majesty's subjects, although not resident in Great Britain; and upon all income of every person residing in Great Britain, and of every body politic or corporate, or company, fraternity, or society of persons, whether corporate or not corporate, in Great Britain, whether any such income shall arise from lands, tenements, or hereditaments, wheresoever the same shall be situated in Great Britain, or elsewhere; or from any kind of personal property, or other property whatever; or from any profession, office, employment, trade, or vocation; that is to say,

"One one-hundred-and-twentieth part of such income, if the same shall amount unto 60*l.* per annum, and shall be under 65*l.* per annum.

"One ninety-fifth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 65*l.* but shall be under 70*l.*

"One seventieth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 70*l.* but shall be under 75*l.*

"One sixty-fifth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 75*l.* but shall be under 80*l.*

"One sixtieth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 80*l.* but shall be under 85*l.*

"One fifty-fifth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 85*l.* but shall be under 90*l.*

"One fiftieth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 90*l.* but shall be under 95*l.*

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"One forty-fifth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 95*l.* but shall be under 100*l.*

"One fortieth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 100*l.* but shall be under 105*l.*

"One thirty-eighth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 105*l.* but shall be under 110*l.*

"One thirty-sixth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 110*l.* but shall be under 115*l.*

"One thirty-fourth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 115*l.* but shall be under 120*l.*

"One thirty-second part of such income, if the same shall amount to 120*l.* but shall be under 125*l.*

"One thirtieth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 125*l.* but shall be under 130*l.*

"One twenty-eighth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 130*l.* but shall be under 135*l.*

"One twenty-sixth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 135*l.* but shall be under 140*l.*

"One twenty-fourth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 140*l.* but shall be under 145*l.*

"One twenty-second part of such income, if the same shall amount to 145*l.* but shall be under 150*l.*

"One twentieth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 150*l.* but shall be under 155*l.*

"One nineteenth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 155*l.* but shall be under 160*l.*

"One eighteenth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 160*l.* but shall be under 165*l.*

"One seventeenth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 165*l.* but shall be under 170*l.*

"One sixteenth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 170*l.* but shall be under 175*l.*

"One fifteenth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 175*l.* but shall be under 180*l.*

"One fourteenth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 180*l.* but shall be under 185*l.*

"One thirteenth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 185*l.* but shall be under 190*l.*

"One twelfth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 190*l.* but shall be under 195*l.*

"One eleventh part of such income, if the same shall amount to 195*l.* but shall be under 200*l.*

"And one-tenth part of such income, if the same shall amount to 200*l.* or upwards."

Mr. *Tierney* said:—Upon the great question now before us, the right hon. gentleman seems to expect either support or silence from this side of the House. To this I answer, that he cannot expect support; he can hardly expect silence; because, having opposed the assessed taxes, it would be strange if I were silent upon a measure, which is, in my opinion, infinitely more destructive, even than that destructive measure. I must consider, Sir, what the effect is of this House agreeing to any principle laid down by that right hon. gentleman. This House agreed last year to the principle laid down by him in his assessed taxes, but the House had not then the idea of going the length which he now proposes; they thought the whole measure had better have been abandoned altogether, than that it should cause the disclosure of the condition of every person in the kingdom. But now the minister, having got the House to recognize the principle, goes a step farther, and proposes that the House should follow him. That proposition the committee have now before them, and I will venture to assert, that even he, confident as he was in the majority that has always supported him, would not have ventured last year, to have laid before this House the monstrous proposition which is now before us. But he says, "You need not make any disclosure of your condition in life." What! If the disclosure I make be not satisfactory, has not the commissioner power to increase the duty on me at his discretion? and are not all these proceedings to depend upon the evidence of an infamous informer? To such a proposition I cannot assent. But that is not all; for if this House agrees to that proposition now, is it too much to say upon experience, if this tax does not come up to the system, a general disclosure of all property must take place, and that too in the course of the very next year? This measure puts a tenth of the property of England in a state of requisition—a measure which the French have followed, in their career of revolutionary rapine, and which the chancellor of the exchequer has, with all his eloquence, justly branded with the hardest epithets. I do not think our finances in a state so desperate as to justify this plan of indiscriminate rapine; for such in my opinion it is. The thing is in its nature unjust. Does the minister mean to say, that a person possessing an income for life of a certain sum, and another person of the same income which he

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derives from the interest of his own capital can equally bear the same taxes? Certainly not; the thing is too palpable to be argued; and yet by this plan of making income the standard of wealth, these two persons will be made to pay alike. But the minister gets over all these as minor objections. He says boldly, "there must be some injustice after all; and the only thing that can be done is, to take care that the injustice shall be as little as possible, that he has brought it as near to justice as he can." To which I answer, that may be his best method of bringing measures before us, but it is not such as I ought to vote for. Besides, the event may happen which he has anticipated, namely, a choice between this measure and utter destruction. But we should, in my opinion, resist such measures until we are in such a state, for nothing but such an alternative can justify such an adoption. At all events, I must have it in my power to say to my constituents before I adopt this, that every other resource has been exhausted. Now, I cannot say that, for there are others yet untouched which ought to go before this measure is resorted to. There are many valuable things under the church establishment, not in the smallest degree beneficial to religion, but which only swell out the pomp and pride and imaginary greatness of some inflated individuals which ought to be brought in aid of the public burthens. The corporations also are liable in the same manner. This tax is said to fall nearly equally on all sorts of property. That is not true. It does not fall on the property of a certain description of stockholders, or what may be called the leading London gentlemen. These gentlemen can pay off any tax without burthening themselves; indeed, the greater the taxes are, the richer they become. The chancellor of the exchequer says, that this plan will occasion the funds to rise; so that if any gentleman possesses 20,000*l.* in the funds, his fortune may improve by this duty. If you rise the stock, for instance, 2 per cent, he will make a large sum of money by his capital; so that, instead of taxing these gentlemen, you will increase their fortunes, while you ruin others. Whereas your plan, to be worth any thing, should compel the monied men to take, at least, their share of the public burthens. But there is another point to be considered, and it will soon turn out to be an answer to the declaration of the chancellor of the exchequer, upon the utility of his plan, and the protection it is to afford to property; which is, that under it, the whole property of England will soon shift hands. I know, that to a dry financier, that is matter of no concern; it is, to him, of no moment to whom the property belongs, provided it produces a given sum to the revenue, but there are others who will see indescribable mischief arising out of it, and will feel it too. The great mass of the property of the country may change owners in the course of six, seven, eight, or nine years. That will make a great difference in the state of the country itself; for, if the rich man in the city buys the small estates of a number of gentlemen (which will be one of the operations of this plan), although the estate will be the same, and the revenue the same, yet the condition of whole districts of inhabitants will be materially altered. When a gentleman of small fortune sells his estate, let him get ever so much for it, there are evils arising from that sale to some parts of his family, which are never to be avoided, nor adequately described. This is a point which, although it may be beyond the comprehension of some monied men, well worthy the attention of this House.

The Resolutions were agreed to.

Dec. 4. On the report of the committee being brought up,

Mr. *Hobhouse* said, that between the evil of persevering longer in the funding system, and the evil of the present attempt to raise a great part of the supplies within the year, he could not well balance his mind; if, therefore, he had not other grounds for rejecting the present measure, he should feel himself at a loss to decide what vote he should give. Those grounds it was now his duty to state. He hoped he might be allowed to inquire, what would be the effect of making either expenditure, income, or property, the basis of taxation. If expenditure be made the criterion, then the avaricious capitalist would not pay his due proportion, but the weight would fall on him who, in consequence of having spent more than he could well afford, was least liable to support it. If income be taken as the test, then the tax would operate with glaring inequality. The man who had an income of 1,000*l.* per annum arising from capital, and the man who gained the same annual sum by a profession or by business, surely

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ought not to be assessed in the same degree. If two merchants had each 1,000*l.* a year from their commerce, they ought not to be taxed alike; because the one might be obliged to apply a greater proportion of his income than the other, to the repair of buildings or machinery. If property only be taxed, it might be argued, that those who had the greatest property might not have the greatest income; and that the necessary expenditure of two persons who had equal property might be very different. On these grounds he could not bring himself to believe that either property, income, or expenditure, should solely and exclusively be taxed. Such a basis of taxation would, in his opinion, be highly unjustifiable. The most unexceptionable one that could be laid, ought to be formed out of a combination of the three. The individual should be rated according to the property he possessed, the income it produced, and the degree of expenditure, which his situation in life, the size of his family, or other considerations might demand.—Besides this objection to a tax upon income, he had others extremely strong and forcible. It was a tax which would strike with peculiar force at industry and the fruits of industry, while indolence was left untouched and encouraged. And what must be the natural consequence of this discouragement of industry? Does it not tend to relax those springs which give life and activity to every branch of trade, commerce, agriculture, &c.? The merchant is accustomed annually to convert a part of his profits into capital. If the tax-gatherers call for a portion of those profits, he must devote less to the increase of his reproductive stock. Thus the progress of our trade would be obstructed. There was a passage in Steuart's Political Economy so appropriate that he would read it: "As to the pure profits on trade: although they appear to be income, yet I consider them rather as stock, and therefore they ought not to be taxed. They resemble the annual shoots of a tree which augment the mass of it; but are very different from the seed, or fruit which is annually produced, and is annually separated from it." These shoots the minister was now lopping, and thus the growth of the tree would be checked; a few years hence he would probably cut down the tree, that he might the more easily lay his hand upon the fruit.—He had not stated this tax to be a violation of the public faith to the stockholder, because he did not view it in that light. Undoubtedly there was a clause in all the loan acts, securing to the public creditor his dividends "free from all taxes, charges and impositions whatever." But from the moment the money had found its way into the pocket of the stockholder, from that moment it became liable to taxation. Neither had he insisted upon another case, namely, that all persons from 200*l.* per annum and upwards should pay a tenth part. Surely it was flagrantly unjust to take 10 per cent from the man who possessed but 200*l.* per annum, while he, who rioted in the enjoyment of 40,000*l.* yearly income, paid no more. As to the productiveness of this new financial project, he would not hesitate to say, that it was calculated, in some respects, to bring in more than the late act for augmenting the assessed taxes.

The Resolutions were agreed to, and a Bill was ordered to be brought in thereupon.

Debate on Mr. Tierney's Motion respecting Peace with the French Republic.] Dec. 11. Mr. *Tierney* rose to make his promised motion, and said:—When I look at the situation of our affairs at this moment, and compare it with that which it exhibited some time since, and when I couple that situation with declarations from a variety of quarters, I am impelled, Sir, to make the motion with which I shall conclude. I am led to think that the pacific disposition which, soon after the conferences at Lisle, was manifested in his majesty's declaration, has been abandoned, and that a new spirit has begun to rise up, against which I must enter my protest. The spirit I allude to is that which leads to an extensive continental connexion. I know it may be said, that this motion breaks in upon the undoubted power which the crown has of making war or peace; but I think this is a point which will not be much insisted upon when it is considered that the power of this House is unquestionable with respect to granting supplies. I have, as a member of this House, as good a right to say, that the supplies granted to the crown shall be granted exclusively for England, as to say, what no man doubts I have a right to say, that there shall not be any supply. But it may be said, that this motion has a tendency to damp the spirit which is now rising in Europe. If that spirit was

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rising, and was likely to animate all Europe against the ambitious projects of the common enemy, I should be the last man who would wish to discourage such a spirit. But I have no idea that my motion would, if assented to, have any such operation. I am led to think there is no symptom of any spirit rising from principle in any quarter; and I need not say much to convince the House, that the value of any spirit, and even the duration of it, must depend upon the principle on which it is founded; and yet this is called a plan for the general deliverance of Europe. I should be glad to know where I am to look for the spirit which has this tendency. Look at Prussia; that power has been at peace now for three years, and the minister of the French republic is there treated with all the respect which nations observe towards those with whom they wish to continue a good understanding. If we look at the Emperor, we cannot say there is any dispute actually between him and the French. There is, indeed a congress held at Radstadt, but that is, I believe, nothing more than a trial for each party to make the best of a mere squabble for the right and left bank of a river. If you look at Russia, you will not see any thing interesting. I confess I can see nothing from that quarter but profession. If we look at the Ottoman Porte, we see nothing like principle in the spirit that has shown itself. If any body supposes that I do not mean to say the French have been guilty of the most scandalous injustice, he mistakes me very much. But I see nothing in the conduct of the Ottoman Porte, which leads me to think, that the resentment shown in that quarter is a resentment arising from any principle on which we can reckon for any permanency: on the contrary, it appears to be a spirit that may be appeased by only altering the course of that which produced it. I see nothing like a systematic course of opposition to the ambitious projects of the enemy in general. The spirit of opposition to the enemy there, will discontinue the instant they gain for themselves what they want. They will have no share in the general deliverance of Europe. Waiting, therefore, to hear where this spirit to resist the French is to be seen, I shall go on with my observations.

But it may be said, "although this spirit does not yet appear every where, yet your motion ought not to be made, for it may prevent that spirit from being excited, and would not such an effect be dangerous to the general confederacy?" Certainly, if there be such a confederacy as that from which you expect to work the deliverance of Europe; but it will be granted to me, that unless the confederacy be general, it cannot be attended with any extensive advantages. If only one power or two powers exert themselves, none of those splendid objects, of which we have heard a good deal, can be rationally expected to be accomplished. Now, with respect to a general confederacy, I am not speaking at random, for it is a subject on which I have had positive experience. The great confederacy against France was when the unfortunate monarch was under trial, and at the time of his death; it was then that France was not under the advantages of a settled government; when all that she possessed was employed only to resist actual invasion; when her troops were raw and undisciplined, and when, in short, she had nothing to oppose to all her difficulties, but the energy of the people. This was the time when the power of a confederacy against France was most formidable to her. Let gentlemen consider what are now the boundaries of the French republic, and then let them look at what is to be effected by a general confederacy. Circumstances must materially have changed from those of the former before we can reasonably hope for any advantage from a new confederacy, or before it can produce any effect different from the last. What produced the discomfiture of the confederates? The skill of the French, or the jealousy and indecision of the confederates? Take which you will of these two, and the conclusion will be the same. Shall I be told that the skill of the French is less now than it was then? That their strength is less; that their generals are less able, their army less steady or less powerful? I think not, sir. Now take the alternative: is there a greater probability that the allies will adhere to each other better than they did formerly? Have they a greater ardour for the common cause now than they had then? Look at the relative situation of the different powers. Is it to be believed that Austria will place more confidence in Prussia, supposing a new confederacy formed, than she did formerly? Can we have more confidence in either of them after we have been deserted by both? Will any gentleman say that we ought to vote larger supplies than any that

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have yet been voted, for the purpose of adjusting this or that point which may belong to the left or the right side of the Rhine? Can any man say that these are points essential to the welfare of Great Britain? Can any of the powers expect much from the co-operation of Russia? Can the Emperor expect much cordial support from those who have deserted him already? can we look with any degree of hope from the decisive and prompt action of the Ottoman Porte? Will any man lay his hand upon his heart and say, that any of the combinations I have stated can be of real service to Great Britain? Well; but the question is altered, and other nations now feel what their interests are better than they did formerly. Those who reflect on the tenor of the manifestoes of 1793 and 1794, will do the parties combined against France the justice to say, that whatever they may have failed in, they did not fail in foretelling the enormities of France. Nothing that has happened could have astonished the confederate powers, for they predicted all the evils that have happened in consequence of the anarchy of France; nor did they fail to ascribe all the evils that have have happened to French principles. And here it is proper I should explain what I mean by French principles. Some gentlemen call all desire for a parliamentary or other reform, the result of French principles: with such men I cannot agree. But as to those French principles which have produced, and are supporting the present tyranny of France, no man would rejoice more heartily at their extinction, But can any thing be done to inflame the resentment of these persons more than has been done by the French republic? Can any thing be done to excite deeper hatred in monarchy against French principles than the conduct held towards that monarch? Can the nobility of any country have greater anger against any thing than they have against that conduct which abolished their whole order at once, and worked the destruction of their titles? Would any thing make the prayers of the church more fervent against anarchy than the overthrowing altogether of all church establishment? Could any thing more enrage the lords of manors, and such persons, than the total extinction of feudal rights? These are the men who once united against France; and it is from an union of these again that you look for the deliverance of Europe. Can you suppose that you will succeed by this new confederacy in any one thing that will be of the least service to this country? I should be glad to see France driven to her former limits; I should be glad to see her renounce her principles of ambition, and thirst for extent of territory. But can you really believe, that, after having got Mantua, Luxemburgh, and other places, she is more easily to be driven within her ancient limits then she was before she made these acquisitions? Or will any man say, that this object is to be accomplished without a great evil happening to this country; in short, without such consequences to our finances as the most sanguine calculator cannot look upon without dismay? Where is your line of demarcation to be drawn? But although you are not to be the conquerors of France, but are only to reduce her to her antient limits, do not think that other powers will go on with you, even in that object; they will not aid and assist you in restoring to each other what has been lost; the confederacy, if it be formed, would dissolve long before that object could be accomplished. But, if you could accomplish that object, I am sure you may nevertheless adopt my motion; for there is nothing in it hostile to that idea—there is not a syllable which goes to prevent the powers of Europe from joining against France; but instead of our endeavouring to extend the confederacy, we should leave them to apply to us. You say, you will bring about the deliverance of Europe. Do not say so: you cannot accomplish it; and I wish you not to make so extravagant an attempt.

Another point that may be urged is, that my motion tends to prevent others from showing their principles, and that it tends to decide upon the aggressions of the enemy towards other powers; by which means, it may stand in the way of the assertion of those rights, which lead to honourable terms of peace for this country. This appears strong at first sight; but if I did not conceive there was an answer to it, you would not have had the trouble of hearing me this day, for I would not urge a single argument that could tend to impede honourable terms to this country. Ministers put into his majesty's mouth, after the breaking up of the conferences at Lisle, words that are tantamount to the spirit of my motion. His majesty there says, that "he looks with anxious expectation to the moment when the government

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of France may show a disposition and spirit in any degree corresponding to his own. And he renews, even now, and before all Europe, the solemn declaration, that in spite of repeated provocations, and at the very moment when his claims have been strengthened and confirmed by that fresh success which, by the blessing of Providence, has recently attended his arms, he is yet ready (if the calamities of war can now be closed) to conclude peace on the same moderate and equitable principles and terms which he has before proposed."* I am not proposing any thing that shall bind government as to terms; I am anxious only to renew the spirit of a declaration, which, in my opinion, did honour to his majesty's councils at the time it issued. If this motion is to be negatived, it is incumbent on those who oppose it, to show what has altered the course we ought to take; for, until that be done, our sincerity in the new confederacy will be distrusted. There are but two reasons that I know of that can be applicable to the case—one is, the aggression of the French in Switzerland. No man looks at that event with more horror than I do; but, remember that that aggression, iniquitous as it was, has not the charms of novelty. Remember it was the same in the case of Venice. The next reason is the victory of admiral Nelson: it was most unquestionably great and glorious; but it should not, in my opinion, change the disposition manifested in the declaration I have recited, after the conference at Lisle; and it should be recollected that the declaration was made after the brilliant victory of Lord Duncan.

The last objection I believe is, that this motion may operate as a notice to France, that we cannot any farther co-operate with our allies. I say, we should endeavour to to make an honourable peace; I do not say what the terms are that will entitle it to that description; that I leave with his majesty's ministers, but when that is capable of being effected, I should be glad to know why this war should be continued on our part for one moment. But is it possible for England to continue the war without co-operating with other powers? I say you do co-operate by your naval exertions. Did you not most effectually co-operate with all who opposed the French last year? Look at the French marine. The French trade also is nearly destroyed. With our fleet we should co-operate with other powers against France; but if by co-operation you mean the sending of troops to the continent, I here protest against such co-operation. If you send to any of the other powers any pecuniary assistance whatever, either under the title of loan, subsidy, or otherwise; in the name of the comfort, the quiet, and the safety of this country, I here protest against it. I do not mean that we should pusillanimously withdraw from the contest. We have no necessity to do so; our course is marked out for us; and by pursuing it we shall co-operate most effectually.

But perhaps some gentlemen will say, they think this an unfavourable moment to proclaim to Europe our pacific dispositions. I think otherwise. Flourishing as our resources have been, our finances are now in a state which no man who has the interest of this country at heart can think of without anxiety. We are carrying on a war, the expence of which is 30 millions a year. In six years we have added nearly 150 millions sterling to our debt, by which we have created the necessity of adding to our annual burthens eight millions—a sum equal to the whole of our expenditure when his present majesty ascended the throne. We are called an armed nation. I feel as much pride as any Englishman ought to feel at the readiness with which my countrymen show their attachment to the country by qualifying themselves for defending it by arms; but this is not a condition of things which can continue long in this country. Besides, I am apprehensive that it must increase the influence of the Crown, which is a great evil. This must be evident to any one who looks at the collection of our revenue. Remember also, that the law has now silenced every man in the country every where except in this House: that the Habeas Corpus act is suspended, and that no man can say he is free. When all these things are put together, am I speaking the truth when I say, that the constitution of England cannot weather such a storm as this much longer? Of Ireland I shall say but little; but I understand, that, notwithstanding all the efforts to curb and repress rebellion there, farther exertions are still wanted for that purpose. If we look at our establishments in the East, we there see very large expences. With respect to the situation of the enemy, they have now, if not the first, certainly the most successful general in Eu-

* See Vol. 33, p. 908.

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rope: he is now at the head of a large army in Egypt, where he has been many months without experiencing any very material check. Should he come back again to France, and turn his mind against this country, I hope we should be able to meet him; but it would be a very serious thing. Then look at the West Indies. And here the first thing that presents itself is the evacuation of St. Domingo, which is an alarming event. Within a few hours sail of our West India colonies, there is a force of no less than 50,000 blacks, disciplined and trained to arms, and inflamed with enthusiastic notions, concerning liberty. We have been concerned for six years in what is called the common cause, for no determinate object that I ever could see. It is time for us to have some separate care of ourselves, by which I do not mean any pusillanimous or dastardly desertion of the contest; but that whenever France shall, by force of arms, or otherwise, become moderate and rational in her public views, we may be in a situation to meet her on the scale of prudence and discretion. Let England pursue the same conduct as she did last year, and she may perhaps, bring about tranquillity; but if we go on with loose and indefinite notions of the deliverance of Europe, such will be the certain charge of it, that the effect will be a load which no resources we have, or can have, will enable us to bear.—The hon. gentleman concluded with moving,

"That it is the duty of his majesty's ministers to advise his majesty, in the present crisis, against entering into engagements which may prevent or impede a negotiation for peace, whenever a disposition shall be shown, on the part of the French republic, to treat on terms consistent with the security and interests of the British empire."

Mr. *Canning* rose and said:—If I might judge, Sir, of the impression made by the hon. gentleman's speech from the manner in which it has been received, and particularly from the unusual degree of apathy and languor which has prevailed on that side of the House on which he sits; I should be led to believe, that the ardour manifested on this side of the House by my noble and hon. friends who rose at the same time with me, was, perhaps, more than the occasion required:—and I assure you, Sir, I should not have pressed myself upon your attention, if I had thought the occasion one which demanded abilities like theirs;—if I had not felt, that what arguments I have to state in opposition to the hon. gentleman's motion, are so clear and plain in themselves, as to require little aid from any talents in the person who states them. The motion of the hon. gentleman cannot be denied to be of an extraordinary nature; and he has certainly treated it in a very extraordinary manner. I conceive it to be consonant as well to the rules of the House, as the reason of the thing, that the House should not be urged to the adoption of a new and unusual measure, without its being, in the first place, established, that there exists some necessity for adopting it, or that some advantage may be gained by doing so. I did expect, therefore, from the hon. gentleman, rather some solid reasons for the measure which he has proposed, than an anticipation of the objections which he thought might be urged against it. He has contented himself, however, with endeavouring to destroy the validity of several arguments which he has heard out of doors, and which he expects to hear to-night against the motion that he has made; but he has omitted, what seemed to me to be more peculiarly incumbent upon him, an explanation of the motives which induced him to make it. I admit that the hon. gentleman has been not unsuccessful in anticipating several of the most obvious and prominent objections against his motion; I cannot think that he has been equally fortunate in removing them. I shall certainly have occasion, in the course of what I have to say, to restate many or most of those which he has anticipated, and not without the hope of establishing them to the conviction of the House. I shall follow him through these objections, as nearly as I can in the same order in which he has brought them forward.

The first objection which he expects to hear, but upon which I am certainly not inclined to lay the greatest stress, is the point of constitutional form. It is by no means my intention to contend, that the nature of the hon. gentleman's motion, though extraordinary, is wholly unprecedented,—much less to deny the power and the right of the House of Commons, to offer its advice to his majesty, on any subject, either of negotiation, or of war. I know they have at several times interfered in both. It is, indeed, somewhat singular, that the hon. gentleman should not himself have cited any of the former

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instances of such an exercise of the right of parliament. Perhaps he has some recollection, that a peculiar sort of fatality has, in almost every instance, seemed to attend interferences of this nature; that in almost every instance, from the Revolution to our own time, they have been either nugatory or mischievous. I will mention two only, out of the few that have occurred during this period: the first,—that which was nearest, in point of time, to the Revolution; the other,—that which is nearest to our own time; the first, an interference tending to prolong a war; the other, intended to accelerate a peace. The first, the warlike measure, was the famous vote of the House of Lords in 1707, "That no peace could be safe or honourable which should leave Spain and the Spanish West Indies in the possession of the house of Bourbon." It is hardly necessary to remind gentlemen, that this vote, carried by the heat and violence of party, had no effect whatever; that no manner of regard was paid to it, in the peace which was afterwards negotiated:—And, whatever might be the faults of that peace, or however loud the cry against the ministers who made it, I do not think that any man, who looks fairly and impartially at that peace now, will say, that it was any very great crime in those ministers, that they did omit to carry this vote into execution. The second example to which I refer, is, the resolution voted by the House of Commons, respecting the "Independence of America." Of a transaction so recent it is hardly possible to speak with the freedom of history. I speak, probably, in the presence of many who took part in favour of that revolution,—of some certainly, who opposed it. Who were right, or who were wrong, I do not presume to determine. But in one thing, I believe, those who opposed and those who promoted it will equally concur,—that the vote which carried that resolution was an *unfortunate* vote; and that it had an influence fatal to the interest of this country, on the peace which concluded the American war. This is a proposition which those who had to make that peace must, I am sure, contend to be true; and which those who condemned that peace would find it difficult to deny.

But whatever might be the force of precedents, they would not of themselves,—even if their bearing was as much in favour of motions of this kind, as unfortunately it has been against them,—they would not of themselves be sufficient to justify the hon. gentleman's motion. It would, I presume, be farther necessary for him to show (as was shown, or attempted to be shown, in all former instances), that some necessity at present exists, which calls for such an interference of the House of Commons. I can conceive such a necessity to arise only from one of two circumstances: either from the circumstance of some opening for peace now presenting itself, of which ministers do not show themselves enough disposed to take advantage;—or from ministers having at former periods evinced a disposition generally hostile to peace, which this motion is intended to censure or to control. That any such opening now exists, the hon. gentleman has not attempted to argue. I must, therefore, naturally have attributed his motion to a false impression remaining on his mind of the conduct of ministers in former negotiations:—I must have conceived, that he retained a confused and perplexed recollection of what had passed at Lisle,—that he remembered something indistinctly of an embarrassment having been thrown in the way of the negotiation by a question about allies,—but utterly forgot that the allies who created this embarrassment were the allies of France and not of Great Britain;—and that, under this mistake, he was bringing forward the restriction in the wrong place, and applying to this country, a cure for the misconduct of the enemy. But I am prevented from admitting even this foundation for his proceeding, by the approbation which the hon. gentleman has expressed of the manifesto published by this government after the breaking off of the negotiations at Lisle. The hon. gentleman distinctly and fairly acknowledges that manifesto to have exhibited undoubted proofs of the pacific dispositions of his majesty's ministers.

And here give me leave to observe rather a singular argument, which grows out of the hon. gentleman's peculiar conduct and situation. He tells you that he brings forward this motion as an "unconnected and unsupported individual," acting with no party or set of men whatever. By agreeing to the motion, therefore, the advantage which we are to gain is his individual co-operation. It is hardly to be supposed that he will be more convinced of the pacific disposition of ministers after this resolution shall have been adopted, than he was after the publication of the

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manifesto, which he has so warmly commended. What was the first step that he took by way of co-operation after that manifesto was published? *He voted against the supply.*—Convinced, that his majesty had done all in his power to obtain peace;—that he had gone almost beyond what could have been expected of him, in forbearance and moderation;—that he had shown even after the victory of lord Duncan, the most decided disposition to make peace, upon fair and reasonable terms;—convinced, that the abrupt conclusion of the negotiation at Lisle had been the act of the enemy exclusively;—that the continuance of the calamities of war was to be attributed to the arrogance, and wickedness, and pride, of the enemy alone;—that his majesty had no choice;—that he must of necessity continue to carry on a war which the mad ambition of that enemy would not allow him to terminate;—in this conviction, to enable his majesty to carry on the war, the hon. gentleman "unconnected and unsupported," individually, *voted against the supply.* I do not mean to impeach the hon. gentleman's conduct in this instance. He had no doubt his reasons for it. But I do mean to put it to the judgment of the House, whether, if it should be evident (as I trust it will be) that no solid and general advantage is to be derived to the country from our agreeing to the hon. gentleman's resolution,—there is much temptation held out to us to do so, by the prospect of his future individual co-operation; whether it is worth while to adopt an unusual, unnecessary, and much more a mischievous measure to evince our desire for peace,—in order to secure the hon. gentleman's vote against the supply for carrying on the war. This, however, would certainly be a very inferior consideration, if there were any utility or advantage to be derived from the measure proposed. I have not heard the hon. gentleman state any advantage as likely to arise from it to the country. As he has affirmed nothing of this kind, I have nothing of the kind to deny. But there is one way of considering what is advantageous to this country, to which I confess I am very partial; and the rather, perhaps, because it does not fall in with the new and fashionable philosophy of the day. I know it is a doctrine of that large and liberal system of ethics which has of late been introduced into the world, and which has superseded all the narrow prejudices of the ancient school,—that we are to consider not so much what is good for our country, as what is good for the human race; that we are all children of one large family;—and I know not what other fancies and philanthropies, which I must take shame to myself for not being able to comprehend. I, for my part, still conceive it to be the paramount duty of a British member of parliament to consider what is good for Great Britain: and where no immediate advantage is pointed out as obviously arising from any new measure that is proposed for our adoption,—I hold it no bad test to examine in what way it bears upon the interests of France, and to conclude, however unphilosophically, or illiberally, that what is good for the enemy, cannot be very good for us.

Now, Sir, I beg to have it understood,—and I assure the hon. gentleman, that I am very far from meaning any thing personally disrespectful to him;—that I give him full credit for feeling, as strongly as any man, every thing that he owes to his country, for being as ready as any man to devote his talents and exertions to her service. I appeal, therefore, not to his feelings, but to his judgment and ingenuity,—when I desire him to consider, whether he could possibly devise any measure (capable, at the present moment, of being patiently entertained by this House or by the public) which should have a more direct and manifest tendency to benefit France, than the motion which he has now brought forward? What could any man—any member of this House (if it were possible to suppose that there should be such a member in this House), most perversely devoted to the views of the enemy, and bent upon exalting France at the expense of Great Britain,—what more effectual measure could such a man take for such a purpose, than by a motion like the present? For what is it that the French Directory appear, by all their conduct, by all their publications, to dread and deprecate more than any other thing in the world? What is it that all their official and unofficial papers most labour to discredit? What—but the revival of a great and general confederacy in Europe, of which England should be the animating soul? Why should we co-operate with the French Directory? What interest can we have in common with them, that should induce us to take their work out of their hands and complete it for them? What advan-

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tage can it be to us to daunt and dispirit Europe; and to relieve the Directory from the apprehension of any powerful resistance, or the necessity of any extensive preparation; to maintain their influence abroad, and their authority at home?

I will put the question in another way. I will suppose that we were now in the last year of the monarchy of France, instead of the sixth or seventh year, or whatever it may be, of the French republic, one and indivisible. By the monarchy I mean, of course, that cruel, wicked, profligate, abominable despotism, of which we have heard so many, and, no doubt, so just complaints, — which oppressed France with I know not what unheard-of cruelties, —which insulted England, and desolated Europe, by crimes and calamities such as can never be imputed to the French Republic. I will suppose that this monarchy had received so formidable a blow as has been given to the Directory by the victory of the Nile;—that its fleets had been disgraced and defeated, in different expeditions against the British empire —that its fairest provinces were in revolt;—that its subjects were universally discontented;—that its commerce was extinguished;—its revenue destroyed;—and its finances, by the confessions of its ablest financiers, in a state of utter and irrecoverable ruin and bankruptcy;—that against the monarchy, thus situated, a general spirit was rising in Europe:—I will suppose that under these circumstances, the ministers of this country had come down to this House, and suggested the propriety of such a measure of abjuration and self-denial as is now under consideration: and I will ask,—what would have been the clamour raised on the other side of the House?—how pointedly would the question have been put to ministers, "What are you doing? Why do you interfere to arrest the downfall of this detestable tyranny? Look on only—do nothing—and it will fall of itself. What business is it of yours to rescue from destruction a power, so inordinate in its ambition, and so hostile to the happiness of Europe."

Such would have been the language that we should have heard, if the monarchy of France had been the object of forbearance, and if ministers had been the persons to advise us to forbear. I will not press similar interrogations in such a way as to impute to any gentleman improper and unjustifiable partialities:—but I cannot help asking, whether the present government of France be indeed one, which has deserved so well of this country,—which, to take the question more candidly, has deserved so well of France, —which, in the still more large and liberal cant of the day, has deserved so well of *humanity*—as that we should feel ourselves called upon to take so extraordinary a step in its behalf? And I would farther ask, whether,—whatever be the present degree of weakness or stability in the government of France (upon which I give no opinion)—whether the effect of this motion must not be to prop its power, and to come to the aid of its unpopularity; whether, with this vote of security in one hand, the Directory might not boldly hold out the Gazette of lord Nelson's victory in the other, and call upon the people of France to balance what had been lost with what had been gained?

But admitting, for the argument's sake, the object of the hon. gentleman's motion to be advantageous to this country; it would remain to be seen how far that object is clearly expressed or understood, and how far the means which he suggests are calculated for attaining it. The hon. gentleman takes credit to himself for not limiting or defining, in any degree, the nature or terms of the peace which it is the duty of his majesty's ministers to conclude. If he had not mentioned this omission as a point on which he takes credit to himself, it is that which I should have been tempted to select for peculiar disapprobation. It seems to me at least a new and unusual course of policy, instead of defining the end, to contract the means of action. It would have seemed more natural and more fair, to say beforehand, "Such or such is the peace with which the country would be contented, and which would be consistent with its security and interests; but the mode of arriving at that peace, is what must be left for his majesty's ministers to devise,"—this surely would be fairer than to say, in the language of the present motion, "I will not tell you what peace you ought to make; —but I will take from you one great instrument for making any peace at all."

By this motion what advice do you give to ministers, or what control do you impose on them? Your advice is certainly not worth much,—when you only tell them how they shall not proceed; but say nothing of how they shall proceed, or whither they shall go. Your control

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cannot be very effectual,—since it is they, it seems, after all, who are to remain the judges of what is "consistent with the security and interests" of Great Britain. These interests and this security must necessarily be considered with relation to the different circumstances of the enemy and of Europe. What might be a secure peace for Great Britain with France reduced in power, and Europe at liberty,—would no doubt be highly unsafe against France in her present state of force and aggrandizement, with great part of Europe at her feet, and the resources of other nations at her disposal. It is equally clear, that it would be more difficult for us, single and unassisted, to extort from France such terms as would be consistent with our interests, than to obtain the same terms, if backed by a powerful confederacy in Europe. The declaration conveyed to France by this motion, that we are determined, at all events, to treat singly, would naturally inflame her pride, and increase her demands. The declaration that we make no common cause with other nations, would necessarily place those nations at her mercy, or on her side. The effect of the motion must therefore be to diminish alike the probable advantages of the peace to be obtained, and our power of obtaining it. It prescribes a more difficult end to be accomplished, with less efficacious means. At the same time, it does not tend to hasten the conclusion of even such a peace, as with such means might possibly be obtained; for it leaves ministers at liberty to conclude no peace, which they do not think "consistent with the security and interests" of the country:—and if they should choose to think, (which they very probably and very laudably might), that no peace would deserve this character, which should not provide for the safety of Europe;—what assurance does this motion give you against a hopeless prolongation of the war?

Sir, the hon. gentleman's purpose; if I at all comprehend it, required that he should have made the latter part of his motion as distinct as the beginning. If he had done so,—if he had fairly stated the idea which he has in his own mind,—I apprehend that, instead of the circumlocution, of a peace "consistent with security and interests," &c. we should have heard of a *separate peace*. I confess, this was what I was prepared to expect. I expected it the rather, from comparing the general reasoning of the hon. gentleman with respect to *separate war*,—with what is reported to have been said upon the same topic in another place by a noble statesman of great consideration and celebrity—a statesman, who to a life of political activity has had the advantage of adding an age of retirement and reflection. This great authority (I understand) recommended, as the only sort of war that suited the circumstances of this country,—a tight, snug, little, domestic war; in which our exertions should be confined at home; in which we should not stretch an arm beyond the circumference of our own dominions, but should sit down with our navy collected about us, and turn round upon our own axis, without reference to the rest of the world. The main advantage stated as likely to result from this system was, that *our sailors would spend their wages at home*:—the noble statesman ought to have added, to heighten the glowing picture, that they would spend them *in exciseable commodities*. This system of separate war was evidently calculated to lead ultimately to separate peace: as, indeed, its illustrious promulgator avowed. I imagined that the hon. gentleman, in adopting the premises of the noble statesman, must be prepared likewise to adopt his conclusion. I should certainly disapprove of both—because I cannot but apprehend that a war so very like peace would lead to a peace that would be very like war—that a contest (if contest it might be called) in which we should be afraid to employ our forces, would lead to a pacification at which we should be afraid to disband them. And this opinion I venture to entertain, in opposition to such high authority; because I think I have on my side the eternal and immutable truth,—that the objects of human desire are attainable only by human exertion;—that never yet did inaction beget repose, or a want of energy and spirit secure permanent and unmolested tranquillity.

The system of separation, however, is defended upon another ground. It is conceded with great candour, that the conduct of France is very bad; but it is at the same time contended, that the other powers of Europe are very bad too; and that the less we have to do with either of them, the better. I must take leave, Sir, in the first place, to observe upon the affectation, which has grown up among those who argue against the war, of pairing-off

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the enormities of France against the imputed crimes of regular governments. No sooner is any fresh act of atrocity, cruelty, perfidy, or injustice, on the part of the French republic brought forward in argument, than recourse is had to some stale trite topic of declamation, which has been used a hundred and a hundred times, against Russia, Prussia, Austria, or the old government of France. During Robespierre's reign, the favourite *pair* for every one of his noyades, and fusillades, his crowded dungeons, and sweeping executions,—was the imprisonment of La Fayette! The partition of Poland too!—(a measure which I have no thoughts of justifying) against how many detestable, impious, and tyrannical outrages, invasions, confiscations, rapines, and massacres, of the French government, has not the partition of Poland been cited as a parallel! It has really, Sir, been called into service so often, that it ought no longer to be considered as a *pair*. It is time to agree, that at least in any future enormities of France, she shall not have a set-off in the partition of Poland.

But after all, to what does this argument at best amount? The world is a bad world, and we are, therefore, to withdraw ourselves from it. Good:—if this were, indeed, practicable; if it remained for us to choose whether we would make a part of this world or no;

"If Heav'n would make us such another world

"Of one entire and perfect chrysolyte,"——

where all should be pure, and perfect, and without a flaw. But if we are, in spite of ourselves, compelled to belong to the world in which we are placed, I know not whether it be not more manly, more statesman like, and more virtuous too, to make the best of it;—to do what we can with the materials which we have; and to endeavour to work out our own happiness,—even though we should not be able to separate and disconnect it from the happiness of our fellow creatures.

I think this a more rational conduct than the sort of national secession which the hon. gentleman's motion goes to recommend. I know of no justifiable reason for such a secession,—I can conceive no motive for it, consistent with true sense of right, and just dignity of character. I know not how we could reconcile it to ourselves (if it were practicable) to withdraw into gloomy solitude, and "grim repose:" while we have talents which God has given us for the benefit of our fellow creatures, and while we have a station which affords us an opportunity of employing those talents to that purpose. It is not under such circumstances that I can conceive it to be excusable, to indulge a whim, and fretfulness, and peevishness of temper, from personal spleen and petty resentment, because every thing does not go exactly as we would have it. I can conceive no cause, except sullen discontent, and disappointed ambition, which could lead us to abjure communion with mankind. For discontent, as a nation, God be thanked, we have no ground! Ours has been a generous ambition,—and it has not been disappointed so far as we are ourselves concerned; but it looks to larger and more elevated objects,—to the peace and prosperity of the world. If, indeed, the full gratification of ambitious views were a sufficient reason for retirement, we might fairly and proudly retire, and say, with truth and confidence, that we have acted our part. If we had undertaken the war for territorial aggrandizement,—if we had been impelled to it by a thirst of naval glory,—we might, indeed, sit down contented with our conquests, when there is scarcely any thing left for us to acquire, we might pause, satiated with victory, when we have no longer an enemy to subdue. But we did not undertake the war for these objects. Undertake it, indeed we did in no sense: it was forced upon us by the aggression and ambition of our enemy: we were compelled to engage in it for our safety and defence,—not in local, partial, and insulated points, but in those points in which our safety is connected and bound up with the safety, honour, and interests of Europe.

"But what," say the gentlemen on the other side of the House, "is the distinct *object* for which we are engaged?"—Gentlemen put this question,—as if an *object* were a corporeal substance, as if it was something tangible, something that could be taken in the hand, and laid upon your table, and turned round and round before them for accurate, occular, examination. In this sense, I profess myself perfectly unable to satisfy them. But do they mean something less precise than this, (though scarcely less so)—the statement of some one distinct term, the obtaining of which is to be settled before-hand as a *sine quâ non* condition of peace? If they do mean this, are they really prepared to

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argue that such a statement, supposing it could be made, would be politic, would be prudent,—particularly with a view to the facilitating or accelerating a pacification? Do they not believe,—is it not evident,—that if it had any effect, it would have an effect exactly the contrary? Do they think that the resolution of 1707, for instance, to which I have already referred, had a tendency to promote, or to retard peace? That resolution, indeed, we know was not adhered to. Was it then politic to have passed it? Or, would the gentlemen be contented with the statement of an *object* to which we did not mean to adhere? Would they gain any thing by this? Would this give facility to peace, or vigour to war? Would it contribute to any possible purpose that could be in any way beneficial to the country?

That we have objects, great and momentous objects, in our view, there is no man that must not feel. I can have no difficulty in declaring, that the most complete and desirable termination of the contest would be the deliverance of Europe. I am told, indeed, that there are persons who affect not to understand this phrase; who think there is something confused, something involved, something of studied ambiguity and concealment in it. I cannot undertake to answer for other gentlemen's powers of comprehension. The map of Europe is before them.—I can only say, that I do not admire that man's intellects, and I do not envy that man's feelings, who can look over that map without gathering some notion of what is meant by the deliverance of Europe. I do not envy that man's feelings, who can behold the sufferings of Switzerland, and who derives from that sight no idea of what is meant by the deliverance of Europe. I do not envy the feelings of that man, who can look without emotion at Italy,—plundered, insulted, trampled upon, exhausted, covered with ridicule, and horror, and devastation;—who can look at all this, and be at a loss to guess what is meant by the deliverance of Europe. As little do I envy the feelings of that man, who can view the people of the Netherlands driven into insurrection, and struggling for their freedom against the heavy hand of a merciless tyranny, without entertaining any suspicion of what may be the sense of the word deliverance. Does such a man contemplate Holland groaning under arbitrary oppressions and exactions? Does he turn his eyes to Spain trembling at the nod of a foreign master? And does the word deliverance still sound unintelligibly in his ear? Has he heard of the rescue and salvation of Naples by the appearance and the triumphs of the British fleet? Does he know that the monarchy of Naples maintains its existence at the sword's point? And is his understanding, and is his heart, still impenetrable to the sense and meaning, of the deliverance of Europe?

Sir, that we shall succeed in effecting this general deliverance, I do not pretend to affirm. That in no possible case we should lay down our arms and conclude a peace before it is fully effected, I do not mean to argue. But that this is the object which we ought to have in view, even if we look to our own safety only,—that of this we ought to accomplish as much, as our means, our power, our exertions, our opportunities will allow,—I do most anxiously contend. If circumstances should unhappily arise to make the attainment of the object hopeless, it will be time enough when they do arise, to give up the hopes of attaining it:—but do not let us run before misfortune, do not let us presume disappointment, and anticipate the necessity of disgrace!

But it is contended, and justly contended, that the deliverance of Europe cannot be effected by our exertions alone: and that, unless other powers are sincerely disposed to co-operate, we are setting out on a romantic and absurd and impracticable enterprise, which we have neither any chance of accomplishing, nor any duty or call to undertake. I perfectly agree, that if other powers are not disposed to co-operate, we have no reasonable chance of succeeding to the extent of our wishes. But I cannot help asking, at the same time—If there be no such disposition on the part of other powers, where is the use or what is the necessity for the hon. gentleman's motion? Why need parliament interfere to prevent his majesty's ministers from taking advantage of dispositions which do not exist, and from accepting co-operation which will not be offered? But if, on the other hand, the powers of Europe, or any of them, are ready to do their part towards the common salvation, and want but our countenance and encouragement to begin; if the train is laid,—if the sparks of enmity and resentment which the aggressions of

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France have kindled in every nation throughout Europe want but our breath to blow them into conflagration;—is it the dictate of our duty, our interest, or our feelings, to save France from destruction,—and by a coarse and hasty proceeding, like that which is now recommended to us, to throw a wet blanket on the flames?

If, however, the co-operation of allies should be offered, we are called upon to receive them with suspicion and distrust; and to be assured, from the fate of former confederacies, from the manner in which we have been duped and deceived heretofore, that no fidelity to engagements, and no consistency of conduct, is to be expected from the continental powers. It seems to me that this is rather a hard, unfair, and hasty judgment. When it is contended, that because Austria and Prussia have been unfaithful to our alliance, and have made peace at different times in a manner equally inconsistent with their engagements and their interests, —Russia and the Porte must therefore be considered as equally faithless, equally worthless allies, as powers on whom no reliance can be placed, and from whose exertions no advantage can be expected; —when the errors of the guilty are thus made to furnish a ground of presumption against the innocent;—I have too much respect for the hon. gentleman, to say, that he reasons falsely, or feebly; but I must say, that if I had ever happened to meet with such a train of reasoning, upon any other subject, in any other place, I should have had little hesitation in condemning it as illogical and inconclusive. Of the treatment, indeed, which the Ottoman Porte receives, I think we have some reason to complain. Gentlemen seem to think that when they have quoted the words of his majesty's speech, "the vigour and decision of the Ottoman Porte," they have entirely settled the question; that they have stated something obviously and palpably absurd and ridiculous:—and the smile with which this quotation is received by those who surround them must very much encourage them in that idea. They seem to think, that because the grand seignior wears a long beard and a long gown, and is altogether a figure such as we are not accustomed every day to contemplate,—to expect vigour and decision, or good sense or sound policy from him, is an expectation in the highest degree wild and fantastical.

I cannot, for my life, bring myself to understand where all this ridicule lies. I know not why the grand seignior should not take as correct a view of his interests, as any other power whose customs may be more conformable to our own. I am sure that the declaration (which we have all seen) of the motives which have guided the conduct of the Porte, is as able and masterly a composition, as correct in principles of justice, and as sound in principles of policy, as any state paper that ever was published by any cabinet of Europe. And if the dress and decorations of the Turk be all that strikes the hon. gentleman as ridiculous:—I know not why I should forbear to take the benefit that might result to my arguments, from calling your attention to the antic mummeries and tri-coloured trumpery of the enlightened Executive Directory of France. But I know, if I were to do so, Sir, I should be censured as illiberal, unphilosophical, and—(there is another word in fashion which I had almost forgotten)—*uncandid.* Allow me, Sir, only to claim the same candour and liberality for the Turk.

But your Turk is a Mahometan, it seems, and therefore an ally not fit for a Christian!—I do not know, Sir, but an alliance with a Mahometan may be as good as a peace with an Atheist; the sanction of its engagements may, perhaps, be as sacred, and its stipulations as likely to be fulfilled.

But he is a sluggish Turk; slow to anger, and hard to be driven into action. If that be his character, what must be the provocations which have roused him!

But then comes the worst of all:—the Turks and Russians are naturally enemies; and yet here we find them most unnaturally allied together against a common enemy. In the first place, Sir, it is a little hard, that, when in favour of France, all notions of received and established policy, and of the balance of power in Europe, are to be utterly disregarded, and put out of the question,—there is yet to be no combination against France but upon principles strictly conformable to them. But after all, what is there in this argument? What does it prove,—but that the aggressions of France have been so multiplied, so various, and so extraordinary, as to unite against her powers the most opposite in nature and in interest, as to make the necessity of resistance, and

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the duty of self-preservation supersede every narrower consideration, every motive of more particular and contracted policy.

Did gentlemen suppose, then, that there is such a magic force in the hostility of France, that if she attacks, at the same time, two powers, naturally enemies to each other, the recollection of their previous hostility shall deprive each of them of the capacity of self-defence? Did any body ever see, or hear, or read of an instance of such rooted, and unconquerable, and unreasonable antipathy? Can they conceive this in individual instances? If a man comes against me with a sword stained with the blood of my enemy, am I therefore to make no resistance to his attack?

For our *old* allies, however, it is taken for granted that no apology can be made. No good reason (it is contended) can be given, why *they* should not be more worthy of our confidence, more steady to our interests and their own, than they have proved themselves in the former confederacy. The hon. gentleman has anticipated an argument which he is apprehensive may be drawn from the change of circumstances in Europe, and from the conviction which is grown up within this last year, respecting the real views and intentions of France. This argument the hon. gentleman has anticipated, and declares he sees nothing in it. The hon. gentleman is right in his anticipation. I certainly am disposed to use this argument; and I certainly am equally disposed to differ from the hon. gentleman as to its force and validity.

I would ask the hon. gentleman, I would ask every man in the House, whether he does not know—personally and intimately know—many individuals in this country, the whole course and current of whose ideas, with respect to France, have of late been entirely changed? Does he not believe that the invasion of Switzerland, for instance, that the profligate, swindling transaction with America, that the event of the negotiation at Lisle, worked a great change in the public mind in this country? Is not the hon. gentleman acquainted with great and illustrious converts among what some persons have deemed the most able, the most enlightened and most respectable characters of the age? And by what rule, either of justice or of reason, does the hon. gentleman propose to limit the benefits of experience to his own countrymen alone? Is it not possible that the statesmen of Austria or of Prussia may have caught some light from what has passed upon the continent of Europe? May not baron Thugut or count Haugwitz have declared (though not, perhaps, in a public tavern), at Berlin or Vienna, that "France has thrown off the mask, if ever she wore it?" Would not they be to be believed if they had made such a declaration? Is there any thing that should make their profession incredible and their conviction suspicious? Or is it to the enlightened wisdom, to the penetrating and perspicacious sagacity, to the firm and inflexible virtue of our own patriot statesmen alone, that we would confine the plea of credulity, and restrict the privilege of recantation?

I, Sir, do not see the justice of such a restriction and limitation: and I confess I should try the sincerity of such a recantation by one test alone; by observing whether or not it were followed by any act that corresponded with its spirit and its meaning. It has been observed by ancient philosophers, that if virtue could be brought to perfection and consummation in any human mind, the possessor of it would still be an imperfect creature, forasmuch as the consciousness of his own excellence would weaken in him one of the first and most amiable qualities of human nature—the indulgence for the frailties of his fellow-creatures. It is, I suppose, from some such cause as this, that the gentlemen on the other side of the House show themselves so little indulgent to the failings and errors of our allies. Conscious that nothing of French artifice, or French wickedness, could deceive or impose upon them, they cannot forgive the folly and stupidity of those who have suffered themselves for a moment to be so deluded: nay, they are hardly content to ascribe the delusion to folly; but are forward to insinuate a suspicion of sympathy and fellow-feeling with France.

We, Sir, who have not the same consciousness of infallibility in ourselves, are naturally averse from such suspicion, and more disposed to make good-natured allowances. And I protest, for one, that if the ministers whom I have mentioned, baron Thugut, and count Haugwitz,—nay, if even their masters, the Emperor and the king of Prussia, had pledged themselves yet deeper to a mistaken opinion of France;—if the forms of the House had admitted of their being brought to your bar, and there, Sir, before

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God and the country, swearing upon their oaths and upon their honour, that they believed—nay, swearing that they always would continue to believe,—that the government of France was the gentlest, quietest, purest, noblest, faithfullest, best of governments;—that it abhorred and detested above all things, the idea of foreign interference with the government of other countries;—that the character of the Directory had something in it of peculiar candour, ingenuity, and openness;—that they (the witnesses) spoke to these facts from their own certain knowledge,—for that they had lived upon terms of the most confidential intercourse with the Directory, and their communication had been almost entirely upon subjects of a political nature:—If, I say, Sir, such had been the testimony in favour of France, given with all the solemnity of an oath, by the great personages to whom I have referred;—I should yet be willing to allow some credit to their asseveration, if they were now to come forward and tell us, that the circumstances of the conduct of France since the time when this testimony was given, that, above all, the declarations and confession of France herself, had completely changed their opinion; had detected the fraud which had been practised upon their judgment, and had convinced them of the profligacy, the atrocity, and the hypocrisy of the Directory. I say, Sir, I should be willing to give full credit to this penitent retraction. I should be willing even to profit by their offers of future co-operation against France. Nor do I well see on what ground the hon. gentlemen could reject such offers, unless they are prepared to argue (which if they are, on their own judgments be the responsibility,—I do not presume to give any opinion for or against such a proposition) that "no man who has once been contaminated by the communion of French principles,—who has been drawn, however innocently or mistakenly, into an approbation and encouragement of persons acting upon these principles,—can ever again be a sound man." I, for my part, should in such a case incline to believe the recantation sincere, and to act upon it as such;—unless indeed at the moment of making it the same person were to say to me, "I do not, however, so much disapprove French principles in themselves: I only doubt the propriety of their application." —Then, indeed, I admit, that I should distrust him again as much as ever.

So much, Sir, as to the particular argument that the past conduct of our former allies ought to lead us to withhold all credit from their future professions. There is, however, another and a more general argument, comprehending alike these and the other powers of Europe; which, but that it has been stated by the hon. gentleman, I should really have thought scarcely worth confutation. We, it seems—a wise, prudent, reflecting people—are much struck with all the outrages that France has committed upon the continent; but on the powers of the continent itself, no lasting impression has been made. Is this probable? Is it possible? Is it in the nature of things, that the contemplation of the wrongs and miseries which others have endured, should have worked a deeper impression upon our minds, than the suffering of those miseries and wrongs has left on the minds of those upon whom they were actually inflicted?

"Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures,
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus."

Yet the echo and report of the blows by which other countries have fallen, are supposed to have had more effect upon us, than the blows themselves produced upon the miserable victims who sunk beneath them.

The pillage and bloody devastation of Italy strike *us* with horror;—but Italy, we are to believe, is contented with what has befallen her. The insults which are hurled by the French garrison from the walls of the citadel of Turin rouse resentment in *our* breasts; but have no effect on the feelings of the Piedmontese. *We* read with indignation of the flag of Bernadotte displayed in mockery and insult to the Emperor and his subjects; but it flaunted in the eyes of the people of Vienna without exciting any emotions of hatred or resentment. The invasion of a province of a friendly power with whom they had no cause nor pretext for hostility, has created in *us* a decided detestation for the unprincipled hypocrisy and ambition of the Directory; but the Ottoman Porte sits down contented with the loss of Egypt; feels no injury, and desires neither reparation nor revenge.

And then, Sir, the wrongs of Switzerland! They, too, are calculated to excite an interest *here*; but the Swiss no doubt endure them with quiet resignation, and contented humility. If, after the taking of Soleure, the venerable magistrates of that place were first paraded round the town in barbarous triumph, and

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afterwards, contrary to all the laws of war, of nations, and of nature, were inhumanly put to death; if, when the unoffending town of Sion capitulated to the French, the troops were let loose to revel in every species of licentiousness and cruelty,—if the women, after having been brutally violated, were thrown alive into the flames; if, more recently, when Stantz was carried after a short but vigorous and honourable resistance, such as would have conciliated the esteem of any but a French conqueror, the whole town was burnt to the ground, and the ashes quenched with the blood of the inhabitants:—the bare recital of these horrors and atrocities awakens in British bosoms, I trust it *does* awaken, I trust it will long keep alive, an abhorrence of the nation and name of that people by whom such execrable cruelties have been practised, aud such terrible calamities inflicted: but on the Swiss (we are to understand), these cruelties and calamities have left no lasting impression; the inhabitants of Soleure, who followed, with tears of anguish and indignation, their venerated magistrates to a death of terror and ignominy; the husbands and fathers and sons of those wretched victims who expired in torture and in shame, beneath the brutality of a savage soldiery at Sion: the wretched survivors of those who perished in the ruins of their country at Stantz; *they* all felt but a transient pang; *their* tears by this time are dried; *their* rage is hushed; *their* resentment silenced: there is nothing in *their* feelings which can be stimulated into honourable and effectual action; there is no motive for *their* exertions, upon which we can safely and permanently rely! Sir, I should be ashamed to waste your time by arguing such a question.

If, however, with such allies as there is a probability of obtaining, with such a chance for the fidelity and stability of those alliances, as the circumstances to which I have alluded appear to furnish, we are yet to be told that there is no safety in such a system: it may be worth while to consider very shortly, whether a greater degree of security would belong to a separate treaty of peace with France concluded at the present moment, if at the present moment it were possible to conclude it. I certainly have no thoughts of troubling you at length upon this part of the subject, because there is not one word in the hon. gentleman's speech which implies the belief (it would indeed be strange if he could believe) that any peace on any terms is at present within our power. But if the faith of other powers be doubtful, the perfidy of France is certain.

Need I enumerate the several instances of direct and profligate breach of faith which have distinguished, or rather which have marked in almost equal degree, every diplomatic act of the French republic? Need I recall to your memory how the preliminaries of Leoben (first granted to the Emperor to extricate Buonaparte from the difficulties of the situation into which his rashness had precipitated him), were withdrawn and cancelled by the French government, under the pretence that to claim the execution of them was to impose on the generosity of the republic? How in their room was substituted the treaty of Campo Formio? And how the treaty of Campo Formio, after being violated in innumerable instances, has been almost distinctly abrogated and renounced in the confederacies at Radstadt? Need I desire you to recollect the fraud and violence by which the French took possession of Venice, and the shameless injustice with which they the next day transferred that possession to the Emperor? Need I return again to Switzerland to remind you, that the invasion of that devoted country was the work not of arms so much as of treaty; that the way for pillage and devastation was opened by the pretext of superintending and guaranteeing a few *parliamentary reforms*? Can we remember these things, and yet pretend to doubt if we shall have as good security for the fidelity of our allies in the prosecution of the contest, as we could build on the faith of France for its safe and honourable termination?

There is yet another point of view, in which this argument may be considered. Let us compare the expectations which we may be allowed to form of our allies, with the character and situation of the several allies of France. If we, in renewing the great confederacy of the powers of the continent, are weaving a rope of sand;—let us examine whether the connexions of France are bound to her by a chain which nothing can loosen. If the ground upon which we stand is false and hollow, let us see whether the alliances of France rest upon a more stable and solid foundation. If the only sure foundation of permanent alliance between nations must be laid in community of interest and of sentiment, in the sense of mutual benefits, or in the interchange of protection on the

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one side, and attachment on the other: — let us look round, Sir, among the states which are immediatly connected with France: let us examine the benefits which they derive from her friendship, and it will not be difficult to estimate the affection which they must owe to her in return. Is it in the Cisalpine, the Roman, the Ligurian republics, those deformed and ricketty children, upon whom the mother republic has lavished so much of her care, —is it in these, however they may bear the precious resemblance of their parent, that we are to look for the fondness of filial duty and attachment? Are we to look for it in the Cisalpine republic, whom, in preference to the others, she appears to have selected as a living subject for her experiments in political anatomy; whom she has delivered up tied and bound to a series of butchering, bungling, philosophical professors, to distort and mangle, and lop, and stretch its limbs into all sorts of fantastical shapes, and to hunt through its palpitating frame the vital principle of of republicanism? Is the infant Roman republic so gratified by the present which France has made to it of five consuls instead of two; as to forget all the miseries, the robbery, the confiscation, and the blood, by which this invaluable acquisition has been purchased? Does the protection which she has afforded to the Ligurian republic, entitle her to their affectionate acknowledgment and pious devotion? Observe, I beg of you, in what a situation those unfortunate Ligurians have been placed by her. They are forced into acts of outrage and hostility against England. We declare war against them;—and such is their confidence in the protection of France, that no sooner has that war been declared, than they come crawling upon their knees to implore our pity and forbearance! Unnatural Ligurians! if they are not thankful for such an instance of the parental solicitude of France for their welfare!

Look next at that unfortunate prince, whose dominions border upon these wretched republics; and ask, by what ties of gratitude is the king of Sardinia bound to his ally! The king of Sardinia, it is true, has not yet been precipitated from his throne: but he sits there with the sword of a French garrison suspended above his head. He retains, indeed, the style and title of king; but there is a French general to be viceroy over him. A prisoner in his own capital, surrounded by the spies and agents, and hemmed in by the arms of the Directory, compelled to dismiss from his councils and his presence all those of his servants who were most attached to his person, and most zealous for his interests; compelled to preach daily to his people, the mortifying and degrading lesson of that patience and humility, of which he is himself a melancholy example, to excuse and extenuate the insults offered by his allies to his subjects, to repress, even by force, the resentment of his subjects against his allies: is this a situation in which the king of Sardinia can be supposed to derive comfort from the alliance of France, and repay it with thankfulness? Would he not, even if this were to be the extent of his suffering and degradation; would he not, if he inherits the spirit of his great ancestors, if their blood flows in his veins; would he not seize, even at the risk of his crown and of his life, any opportunity that might be afforded him, to emancipate himself from a connexion so burthensome, to shake of the weight off a friendship so intolerable?

But he well knows that he has not yet suffered all that is prepared for him. He knows full well that he is allowed to occupy even this shadowy and tottering throne, to grasp the "unreal mockery" of a sceptre, only so long as he shall be necessary as purveyor for the French army in Italy: or until it shall please the capricious cruelty of his tyrants to end his disgrace by annihilation. Perhaps the supplies for a campaign may be more readily procured by the operations of a regular government, than they could be by any new upstart revolutionary power, in a country agitated by the ferment of political change. Perhaps the lust of destroying may overbear this prudential consideration. But, at all events, the war in Italy once over, whether it be in the tide of victory, or in the ebb and reflux of defeat, that the French armies return through Piedmont, their passage will alike be fatal to this unhappy monarch and to his people; they will equally sweep away with them, in a torrent, whatever remains of royalty and of established government; and will leave behind them the same wreck, the same shapeless ruins, with which the fair face of the neighbouring countries is already encumbered and deformed.

But, perhaps, with more powerful and more respected allies, with those whose

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names were brought forward with such display and ostentation in the negotiation at Lisle, as inseparably connected with the honour and interests of the French Republic: perhaps with Holland and with Spain a greater degree of forbearance has been observed; a more friendly and liberal intercourse has been established; a more honourable and independent system of communication has been maintained.

The friendship of Holland! The independence of Spain! Is there a man so besotted as to suppose, that there is one hour of peace with France preserved by either of these unhappy countries, that there is one syllable of friendship uttered by them towards France; but what is extorted by the immediate pressure, or by the dread and terror of French arms?——

——— " mouth-honour, breath
" Which the poor heart would fain refuse, but dare not!"

Have the regenerated republic of Holland, or the degraded monarchy of Spain, such reason to rejoice in the protection of the French Republic, that they would voluntarily throw themselves between her and any blow which might menace her existence? Holland once had wealth, had industry, had commerce. Where are they now? Gone; swallowed up in the all-devouring gulph of French bankruptcy. Holland once had flourishing colonies; them, perhaps, France has preserved for her. The flag of the enemies of France is flying in Ceylon, and at the Cape of Good Hope. Holland had once a navy, a navy of strength and gallantry and reputation, a navy which has often contended even with our own, and contended with no mean exertion, for the mastery of the sea? Where is it now? Where is the skill which directed, the promptness, courage, and vigour, which manned it? All utterly destroyed and gone. The baneful touch of French fraternity has blasted the reputation, has unmanned the strength, has bowed the spirit, of the people, in the same proportion as it has exhausted the resources of the country. The spirit of the people is bowed, it is true; but let us trust that it is not broken; let us hope that, if an opening should be presented, it may yet spring up with sudden and irresistible violence, to the astonishment and overthrow of its oppressors.

Spain, however, it may be said, is still powerful, and still a monarchy; to Spain, therefore, the friendship of France must have been offered on more equal and durable terms. An alliance with a Bourbon cemented with Bourbon blood cannot but be lasting. I look at Spain, Sir, and it must be owned I find her still a monarchy; she has not yet received the blessings of a Directory and two councils. But, I confess, I perceive no one of those features by which the monarchy of Spain has heretofore been distinguished. I see nothing of power; I can discover nothing of policy. I know, that to be engaged in an impolitic war, is not of itself an unheard-of, or an unaccountable novelty. Spain has, no doubt, been often engaged, as well as other powers, in wars of pride, in wars of ambition, in wars of doubtful or mistaken interest. In an absolute monarchy too, like Spain, it must often have happened, that, in matters of war, or alliance, as well as of internal regulation and domestic policy, the will of the prince, guided either by shallow favouritism, or by crooked intrigue, has at times, adopted measures prejudicial to the welfare of his subjects. A powerful and haughty nobility, a numerous and highly-privileged clergy, may at other times have given an impulse to the direction of affairs agreeable only to their own prejudices and partial interests. At other times, again, the tempest of popular fury has overborne, both the will of the prince and the power of the aristocracy, and driven the machine of government wholly out of its natural course, and direction. But a situation of things, in which the crown is enthralled, the aristocracy humbled, and the nation in general degraded and impoverished, not by the effects of internal struggle, or the perverse preponderance of any one party or member of the state, but by the palpable, undisguised, and oppressive agency of a foreign power: this is, indeed, an unusual situation for an independent kingdom. Such is, however, the situation of Spain. The power of the monarch, the prejudices and privileges of the higher orders, the comfort, happiness, and almost subsistence of the mass of the people, are all embarked together in a war, of which the success or failure must be equally fatal to them all: a war, which has committed that country with an enemy whom it dares not face, and has linked it to the fortunes, and subjected it to the will of an ally, whose friendship is more formidable than hostility: a war which has brought into contempt the authority

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of the government, and the character of the nation; which has exhausted the commercial and annihilated their military marine: which in precluding their intercourse with their colonies, has cut off the springs of wealth that fed the state, and the streams of commerce that enriched the country; a war, which has done more in two short years, under the auspices of France, to carry into execution that vote of the British parliament in 1707, to wrest the monarchy of Spain and the Spanish West Indies from the possession of the house of Bourbon, than all the exertions of this country could ever have effected, than all its enmity could ever have desired.

So fatal has been to Spain already the friendship of the French republic; and such are the obligations by which she is bound to it in perpetual allegiance and fidelity! But this is not yet all: the king of Spain has yet to drink the bitter dregs of misery and degradation.

Sir, when Louis 14th broke up the conferences of Gertruydenberg rather than submit to the proposal of turning his arms against his grandson; whatever our dislike of his former insolence, or our detestation of his ambition may be, we cannot refuse our approbation to this just display of spirit and of feeling. Fallen as he then was from the splendor of his high fortunes, and in some measure at the mercy of his enemies; we cannot but applaud the honourable pride with which, while conceding territory and dominion as the price of peace, he yet rejected peace itself, when it was to be purchased with ignominy. I think, too, we cannot but condemn the cruel and ungenerous policy which dictated the demand of such a sacrifice. But this, we are to recollect, was the demand of a triumphant enemy. Mark now the extortion of a protecting friend! The king of Spain, exhausted in his resources, and disgraced in his arms, by a war carried on at the instigation, and for the exclusive interest of the French Directory, is, in return for these exertions, commanded by that Directory to employ what remains of the strength and power of his kingdom, for the conquest of Portugal, for the subversion of the throne to which his daughter is heir. Have we the feelings of men, and do we doubt what sentiments of indignation and disgust this outrageous command must have excited in the bosom of a father and a king.

Now, Sir, there is a story, and it was a good one till the French got hold of it—the story of *William Tell*. I think I need hardly make the application. Would it appear to us a surprising or an unnatural thing, if the king of Spain, urged and finally compelled to point his last weapon at the crown of his daughter, should turn round in the fury of despair, and aim it at the bosom of the tyrant who dictated the blow?

I have not troubled the House with this enumeration, as conceiving it to hold out in itself inducements and temptations for the continuance of the war; supposing that we had any choice as to continuing or concluding it. But forced as we are to persevere in the contest, and expedient as it appears, that we should furnish ourselves with whatever means we can procure for conducting it to a termination consistent with our safety and our honour, and convinced, as I think every man must be, that the co-operation of other powers affords at least one great instrument for such an exertion: it does, I think, seem material, when against the system of alliances no argument is so loudly urged as the probability of those alliances proving unfaithful and unsound; It does, I think, seem material to ascertain, whether this hazard is peculiar to our situation alone; or whether, if on the one hand we have but feeble assistance, we are likely, on the other hand, to have any thing but feebleness to oppose. Committed with our enemy single handed, France to England, what should we fear? But if the accession of allies is to us an accession of weakness, is not something to be assured that to France it is not an accession of permanent and formidable strength? that if France has the means of seducing our allies, we have the satisfaction of feeling that our interest cannot be indifferent to the allies of France? That even when men called on her side and fighting under her banners, they cannot fail in their secret hearts to pray that the victory may be on our side.

Is not this the case? Do we not know it to be so? Who is there that has not heard, and heard with heartfelt delight, that the glorious victory of the first of August communicated a sensation of triumph and of joy, not only to the heart of England; not only to the bosom of those nations whose deliverance is more immediately effected, not only to nations neutral in name, but who feel in spite of their neu-

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trality that their independent existence is involved in the issue of the contest, but even to nations nominally hostile to Great Britain, to governments the slaves of the power or creatures of the caprice of France? The presence of a French ambassador could scarce repress the burst of exultation in courts that trembled at his frown. The whispered satisfaction went round in circles, where an open manifestation of joy would have been treason. And even the vassal republics leaped in their chains.

Oh! but however willing the allies of France might be to seize a favourable opportunity for shaking off the yoke of her protection, were we even able to rally them on our side in the outset of the contest, their assistance would be nothing worth. Exhausted and dispirited as they are, they have neither the heart nor strength to fight the battle of independence! True, Sir, they have been cruelly reduced and broken down. It is true, that many of them have been moulded and distorted into shapes so strange and unnatural, that they scarce have limbs to use, or the power of self-motion remaining; but yet, even so, they are not wholly without vigour and vitality,——

"Spoliatis arma supersunt."

The arms which they have remaining are the arms most terrible to tyrants, their wrongs, their desperation, the desire of revenge. Let France appeal to the bad passions of *our allies*; let her cajole their fears, or inflame their appetite for aggrandizement. The foundations of *our* tacit but intimate alliance with the *Allies of France* are already laid, in their just resentment, in their proud indignation, in every virtuous and every honourable feeling. When did such a contest terminate in giving ultimate and permanent preponderance to evil? If I do not venture to anticipate a fortunate result amounting to the full completion of our sanguine and justifiable expectations, I may surely ask, what has France done to deserve that the ordinary course of human events should be reversed in her favour?

But then, Sir, another and a graver doubt is stated. It is doubted whether, with half the world in arms on our side, the objects which we might hope to obtain, would be, in any just and politic sense, *British objects*. I, Sir, have not sat long enough in this House to remember the time, but a time I am told there was, when if I had ventured to hesitate a doubt whether or not the situation of the powers of the continent, relatively to us or to each other, and the general balance of Europe (as it is called) were objects of British concern, I should have been scouted and laughed at as a driveller and an ideot, or reviled as a presumptuous arraigner of the wisdom and policy of our ancestors. I understand that all this is now changed. I understand that the great authorities, from whom I should more particularly have expected such a censure if I had ventured such an opinion, have entirely thrown away and abandoned their favourite system; and are now more strenuous in decrying those who maintain it, than they were before in propagating it themselves. I cannot account for these excentricities; but I do not presume to blame them. They at least teach me to proceed with caution; and rather to inquire with great humility from the hon. gentleman on the other side of the House, whether or no such and such things *are* objects of interest to our country? than to state any affirmative opinion of my own upon the subject.

The hon. gentleman mentioned the East Indies, and alluded to the expedition to Egypt as having threatened our possessions in that quarter. Is then the deliverance of Egypt from a French army a *British object?* Does the hon. gentleman, or does any man, believe, that if peace had been concluded at Lisle, this expedition would at all the less have been undertaken? Does he believe that, in that case to defeat the expedition would have been equally a *British object?* And does he think that, after the peace made at Lisle, we should have been equally in a condition to defeat it? Would not the co-operation of the Turk have been then desirable, to enable us to effect this purpose? Is it less desirable now? If, by his co-operation, we are enabled to confound and expel that horde of robbers, and buccaneers, who have taken possession of his Egyptian territory; or (what I should like much better), to shut them up on all sides, and leave them there to be quietly and gradually exterminated—is *this* no advantage to Great Britain? Was the purpose of the hon. gentleman's motion to preclude the possibility of *this* event? If, by the joint assistance of Russia and the Porte, we could sweep the Levant and the Mediterranean of the scattered remnants of this piratical armament; if the coasts of Italy

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were thus rendered unassailable by the enemy, and the southern coasts of France thus laid open to our attack, and the ports and commerce of the Mediterranean and Levant secured to us; are *these British objects?* Are the Netherlands a *British object?* I have heard that the dependence of the Netherlands on France, has in former times been considered as so prejudicial to this country, that there was no case in which that object alone would not have been a sufficient cause for prolonging or for even engaging in a war. I do not assert that this is so. But if there be any truth in this opinion, and if, by a vigorous co-operation on the part of Austria or Prussia, or both, we might have a chance of wresting this possession from France, —will the hon. gentleman, will any other man in the House be the person to get up and say, 'This you might effect, but I will prevent you?" If by the help of Prussia, we might hope to rescue Holland from her present state of servitude and degradation, to raise her head once more among the independent powers of Europe, a rich, a flourishing and a happy country, connected with us by old habits, common interest, and the reciprocation of commercial advantages: will any man say that this would not be a *British object?* will any man lay in his claim now, would any man be proud hereafter to have entitled himself, to the credit of having thrown an insuperable impediment in the way of the rescue and restoration of Holland?

And yet, Sir, Holland has heretofore been thought to be so intimately interesting to this country, especially by gentlemen who used to sit on that side of the House, and whose former opinions on foreign politics I have been accustomed to attach no small degree of respect and consideration, that, if I am rightly informed, (for it is much beyond my memory in parliament) the only act of my right hon. friend's administration which has had the good fortune to receive the approbation and applause of those gentlemen, and upon which they lavished as large and unqualified praise as his warmest supporters could have afforded him, was a spirited and judicious exertion by which, in the year 1787, the designs of France in Holland were defeated (at the risk of a war), and the ascendancy of this country secured.

I cannot believe that if we were now debating, if it possibly could be fit matter for this House to debate, "whether or no, having an opportunity to conclude a peace in all other respects desirable, we should continue the war for the single purpose of the deliverance of Holland alone," I cannot believe that those persons to whom I have referred, holding the principles which they have heretofore professed, could hesitate to give their vote in the affirmative. If I am wrong in this supposition, I desire only to be informed, where, and when, and how, the change in the policy of the country took place? Is the ambition of France less formidable now? Is her desire of aggrandizement less notorious? Is her power less terrible? Is her hostility to this country less acrimonious! than when, in the year 1786, the commercial treaty with France was arraigned, by the same persons whose maxims of foreign policy I have already quoted, not as unfavourable to Great Britain, but as likely to take off the edge of our national antipathy against France? When my right hon. friend was attacked and reviled for having, in a paltry search after mercantile profit, wholly abandoned the doctrines of our ancestors, and improvidently thrown away the safety of posterity, by admitting the possibility of any relations between this country and France, except those of jealous rivalry or open contest; for having attempted to lull England into the belief that the ambition of France, because not active at the moment, was extinguished; that her power, because not exerted, had ceased to be formidable: that her professions of friendship could mean any thing, but to gain time and strength; that her apparent pacific disposition could be any thing but a drawing of breath against the renewal of hostilities?

If all this is changed, allow me to inquire of those who can instruct me, by what process the change has been wrought? and at what period? What is its origin and date? Did it come in with the new style? Was it on *primidi*, *duodi* or *decadi*, in what month, and in what year, of the new republican calendar? Did the old system expire in September, and the new one begin with *Fructidor?* I really ask for information. I do not mean to question the propriety of the alteration, but to get at the reason of it. I am not too old to learn. But I cannot take it upon authority alone: and that too, an authority which has always hitherto been on the other side. I must continue to repeat my old catechism, until I am suffi-

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ciently illuminated to understand the articles of the new.

Till then, I must continue to ask with some degree of earnestness, if any one of the objects, which I have enumerated, may possibly be obtained by an alliance with the powers of the continent, much more if we could be sanguine enough to suppose that such an opening might arise, as would lead to the attainment of them all, as would lead to the reduction of France within her ancient limits, and to the replacing Europe nearly in the situation in which it stood before the commencement of the war; whether or no it is possible for a member of the British parliament to entertain so extraordinary and perverse an ambition as to be desirous of having it to say hereafter, "All this might perhaps have been accomplished, but by a single motion I prevented it all?"

Understand me, Sir, however, that I do not mean to undertake that if the hon. gentleman's motion should not pass, all this will therefore be accomplished. We are debating now, not whether or no such and such exertions will lead to such and such results; but whether or no we shall gratuitously throw away the only chance which we have for the exertions being made. The hon. gentleman does not affirm, that Europe cannot be saved; he only desires that we may have no share, that we may give no encouragement for saving it. In answer to such a proposition, it is not necessary for me to argue (what is not denied) that the success of the experiment is probable: it is only necessary for me to ask, whether its success is so improbable, and its nature so uninteresting, that you will determine beforehand that it ought not to be tried?

The hon. gentleman however, for his part declares, that he "washes his hands of the whole business." The hon. gentleman has a habit, Sir (which I do not mention to disapprove it) of appealing to the testimony of his conscience, and of holding out to his opponents the miseries which must accrue from "pillows stuft with thorns." Has the hon. gentleman ever considered the present situation of Switzerland in this point of view? And is he so eager to "wash his hands" of any share in her possible emancipation? Is it necessary as a balm to his conscience? Will it strew his pillow with roses, to be able to say to himself: "If the people of Switzerland succeed in breaking the galling fetters of an intolerable and bloody tyranny, thank God, I have given no aid to their efforts. I can lay my hand upon my heart and declare, that for ought I would have done for them, or would have encouraged them to do for themselves, the Swiss should have continued to groan in bitterness of sorrow, in abasement and despair. Fight your own battles, miserable Swiss!—England has no sympathy with your sufferings!—Bind tighter their fetters, sanguinary Directory—You have nothing to dread from English interference!

"Bleed, bleed, poor country!
"Great tyranny, lay thou thy basis sure,
"For goodness dares not check thee!"

Such, Sir, is the language of the hon. gentleman's motion. But such, I trust, is not the sense of those who have heard it. I too will appeal to the conscientious feelings of individuals. I might appeal to their recorded professions in the almost unanimous vote upon the address to his majesty at the beginning of the session; but I confess when I can reach the heart and spirit, I prefer a direct appeal to them, to any argument that rests on mere formal ties or technical obligations. I might remind every gentleman who hears me, that he has concurred in an address to the throne, expressing his hearty hope that the opening afforded by the glorious successes of his majesty's arms may lead to "the general deliverance of Europe;" and pledging himself, in no equivocal manner, to assist with his voice and council in the prosecution of this important object. I might require them to reconcile, if they can, the pledge there taken with a motion which contradicts both its letter and its meaning. But I prefer going home with every man to his own bosom, and desiring him to remember, what were his first individual impressions upon receiving the account of lord Nelson's stupendous achievement? What was the language of every society in which he happened to be conversant? The first sentiment undoubtedly was that of thanks and praise to the heroes who had thus exalted the name, the power, and the glory, of their country, and of humble gratitude to that Providence which had so signally prospered their exertions. But next—what occurred to every man's feelings and understanding? what was the question which immediately succeeded to the first burst of wonder, the first transport of thankfulness, the first emotions of rapture and delight? I see I am anticipated, "What effect will this have upon

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the powers of the continent?" This was the question asked and echoed by a thousand tongues. What then was the meaning of this question? Was it the offspring of cold speculation? of idle curiosity? No. It sprung from the instantaneous, and almost instinctive, conviction, that, in spite of all the sophisticated argument that may be urged to dissuade us from a generous sympathy with the fates and fortunes of other nations, we *have* an interest in the liberties of the continent; that *our* assurance is doubly sure when those around us are preserved from destruction; that *we* can be but precariously safe, so long as there is no safety for *the rest of Europe.*

Depend upon it, Sir, in all questions which partake equally of reason and of feeling, the first impressions of a good heart and sound mind are rarely to be distrusted. They may be sanguine; they may be romantic; they may represent the object desired as much nearer, than in the practical pursuit it turns out to be; but, as to the object itself, they are seldom misdirected. And I believe that any man of honest and liberal feelings, who can recollect what were his first impressions upon any subject, in the consideration of which the heart as well as the understanding was engaged, will find that, in consulting those impressions, he has not been led astray. How stands the case in the present instance? Have we any reason to repent or to be ashamed of the wishes that sprung up in our bosoms upon this occasion? Was the impulse too generous, and must it be restrained? Was the benevolence too large, and must it be contracted? What new circumstances have arisen to vary our original view of the subject? Has England become less powerful to interfere? Has the slavery of the continent been lightened? or the tyranny of France softened or subdued? Or has some disposition for peace been manifested by the enemy? such as throws difficulty in the way of any hostile and offensive operations against them; and requires that we should rest on our arms until their intentions shall be more clearly explained? I have heard of nothing of this sort—Has the hon. gentleman? He has mentioned nothing of it. He has not pretended that *France* is willing to negociate. He has not advised that *we* should propose a negotiation. He has indeed given it as his opinion that peace is desirable; and he has drawn some arguments to this effect from Ireland, from the East Indies, and from St. Domingo. I shall not follow him into these arguments; both because I think that they may all of them, with much greater propriety, be reserved for separate discussion in their due time; and because, unless this motion were to be understood distinctly as a motion for peace, I do not see how they can be made to bear upon the present discussion.

But does the hon. gentleman intend his motion as a motion for peace? Then indeed I should have a worse opinion of it than I had before. For is this the way to go about such a business, with any prospect, or with any serious appearance of a desire, of success? If the hon. gentleman really thinks this a moment for opening a negotiation—why has he not the candour and manliness to say so? Let him bring the matter distinctly to a question; and let us argue it. I have no hesitation in saying that it is my decided opinion that this is not the moment. But my opinion is more decided still, that, if this were the moment, the hon. gentleman has chosen the very worst possible way for availing ourselves of the opening.

Is it dignity, and etiquette, and national honour, that stand in the way of a more direct attempt at negotiation? Is it necessary in the hon. gentleman's judgment that France should make the first overtures? I confess, Sir, I have no such delicacy; and if the moment seemed to me proper for any overtures at all, I should not raise much squabble about who should offer, or who should receive them. But if the hon. gentleman has this delicacy, mark, I entreat you, how delicately he manages it. He will not speak to France, but he would speak at her. He will not propose—not he—that we should say to the Directory, "Will you make peace?" No, Sir, we are merely to say to ourselves, loud enough for the Directory to overhear us, "I wish these French gentlemen would make an overture to us." Now, Sir, does this save the dignity of the country? or is it only a sneaking, shabby way of doing what, if fit to be done at all, must, to have any serious effect, be done openly, unequivocally, and directly? But I beg the hon. gentleman's pardon: I misrepresent him; I certainly do. His motion does not amount even to so much as I have stated. He begins farther off. The soliloquy which he prompts us by his motion is no more than this—"We must

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continue to make war against France, to be sure—and we are sorry for it, but we will not do it as if we bore malice. We will not make an ill-natured, hostile kind of war any longer—that we won't. And who knows but, if they should happen to overhear this resolution, as the Directory are good-natured at bottom, their hearts may soften and grow kind towards us—and then they will offer to make a peace!" And thus, Sir, and thus only, is the motion a motion for peace.

But the hon. gentleman reproaches his majesty's ministers that they have lost all their pacific dispositions; that they are become inveterately and incurably warlike; that the spirit of moderation which he so much commended in the manifesto of last year is evaporated; and that however they may have stood out against lord Duncan's victory, that of lord Nelson has intoxicated and inflamed them to madness.

That the confidence of the country is indeed high, I am happy to acknowledge; and that the government partakes the spirit of the people, I am equally willing to believe. But that this spirit has started suddenly out of the late victory, and is exclusively to be attributed to it, I cannot agree. It was confirmed, indeed, by that victory, a victory which would have created a spirit if it had not found one. But that the spirit existed before the event of the first of August, is no derogation to the glory of that day, and is a proud accession of dignity to the character of the country. It adds new lustre to the character of the country, it places in a more conspicuous light the talents and reputation of lord Nelson, that before we were in possession of the confidence which grew out of his victory, we had the confidence to presume it.

Let us recollect only the days and months of anxiety which we passed, before the intelligence of that memorable event had reached us. It was an anxiety, not of apprehension, but of impatience. Our prayers were put up, not for success, but for an opportunity of deserving it: we asked, not that Nelson might conquer Buonaparte, but, that Buonaparte might not have the triumph of deceiving and escaping him; not that we might gain the battle, but that we might find the enemy: for the rest we had nothing to fear——

"Concurrant pariter cum ratibus rates;
Spectent Numina Ponti, et
Palmam, qui meruit, ferat!"

Standing, then, in our present proud and exalted situation, fortified by that confidence which has its foundation in the good sense, the spirit, the unexampled prosperity of the nation, and which by the blessing of Providence, the signal and glorious successes of our arms have established and confirmed, what is the best advantage that can be made of such a situation? "Hoard up your safety for your own use," says the motion of the hon. gentleman. "Lend a portion of it to other nations, that it may be returned to you tenfold, in the preservation and security of the world,"—is the dictate of a larger, and, I think, a sounder policy.

But the nations of the continent, the hon. gentleman will tell us, stood by, while we were engaged in a struggle in which our very existence was at stake, without offering any assistance, or manifesting any interest in our preservation: undoubtedly, so they did: and, undoubtedly, as the hon. gentleman insinuates, our revenge is now in our power. We may tell those, who abandoned us at that moment of peril, that it is now our turn to take breath, while they are contending; that to us is now the respite, and to them the toil: that as they left us contentedly to our fate, we consign them unpityingly to theirs. We may do this in strict retaliation: but I think a British House of Commons will feel that we have a nobler vengeance in our power. We have it in our power to say to the nations of Europe: "You deserted us at our utmost need; but the first use that we make of our prosperity is, to invite you to partake of it. We disdained to call you in, reluctant as you appeared, to share our danger; but, we are now, by our own exertions, secure; come now, and take shelter under our security."

Sir, they were wise words that were spoken by a great statesman and orator of ancient times, under circumstances not wholly unlike the present circumstances of the world. "If by any super-human testimony, for to such a paradox no testimony merely human could possibly obtain belief, if by an angel from Heaven I were to be assured, that the farther the enemy pushed his conquests over other countries, the more territory he acquired—the more governments he subverted—the more nations he subdued,—by so much the more quiet, the more harmless, the more friendly neighbour he would be to this country: I protest that I would not, even with this view, and under these conditions, consent

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to give my vote for the slavery of Europe. But if there be no man upon earth who will venture to assert so monstrous a proposition; if the very reverse of all this be demonstrably true; if every step that the enemy takes upon the continent is a step to the accomplishment of our destruction, if every city that he ransacks, every district that he acquires, is a fund of wealth and a levy of soldiers, to be employed hereafter in an exterminating war against us: then, in God's name, to what do we look? or wherefore are we hesitating?"

Since, then, Sir, this motion appears to me to be founded on no principle of policy or necessity; since if it be intended for a censure on ministers,—it is unjust; if for a control,—it is nugatory; as its tendency is to impair the power of prosecuting war with vigour, and to diminish the chance of negotiating peace with dignity, or concluding it with safety; as it contradicts without reason, and without advantage, the established policy of our ancestors; as it must degrade in the eyes of the world the character of this country; as it must carry dismay and terror throughout Europe; and, above all, as it must administer consolation, and hope, and power, and confidence to France; I shall give it my most hearty and decided negative.

Mr. *Jekyll* said:—I expected, Sir, that the motion would have been attended with at least this advantage, that it would have procured to the House the satisfaction of knowing the precise object of the war. My hon. friend over the way, has not, however, afforded us any certain ground of judgment upon this point. The hon. gentleman thought proper to state that my hon. friend's motion had no reference to peace. On the contrary, the motion had so far peace in its contemplation, as it was the direct purpose of it to avoid all engagements which could tend to impede a peace on secure and honourable terms. The hon. gentleman alluded to the victory of the Nile. He asks, what was the sensation which this glorious achievement produced? I will tell him, that the sensation of joy which it occasioned was combined with the hope that it might tend to the restoration of peace. Now, however, it is thrown out that not peace but war was the great consequence to which it led, and we are called upon to rejoice, not in its pacific effects, but in its tendency to give new vigour to schemes of warfare and coalition. If the moment in which we stand on the proud eminence of such a triumph be not the moment to think of peace, in what state of our affairs can we turn our thoughts to this great object with propriety? I see no ill consequence that could result from making offers of peace frankly and directly. This country, however, is again to be embarked on the ocean of continental politics; we are again to enter the lists without knowing the purposes for which we are engaged, or the extent to which we may be involved. The hon. gentleman says, that the faith of treaties with France is not to be trusted. If there be any thing in such an objection, it must be an objection to all peace. He says that if the negotiation of Paris or Lisle had concluded in a treaty, the expedition to Egypt would nevertheless have taken place. On this principle we are never to make peace because treaties may be broken. Thus we are again brought back to the war of extermination, which I thought had now been exploded. But it seems, as the phrase is, we are to rouse Austria and Prussia to second the magnanimity of Russia and the vigour of the Porte on this occasion. Is there any man, who understands even the grammar of politics, that can look for efficient co-operation towards any great object of general concernment to Europe? Who does not know the schemes of aggrandizement which Russia meditates at the expense of Turkey? Who did not apprehend that when a Russian fleet was allowed to pass the Dardanelles, the Ottomans had, as it were, consented to their own destruction? What kind of vigour do we expect to be displayed by the Ottoman Porte in this new scheme of coalition? Does not every body know, that as a nation, the Turks are the most sluggish people on the face of God's earth? Have we not proofs before our eyes of their debility and impotence? How, then, can men of common observation talk to us of the importance of the Turkish co-operation for any efficient attack upon France? What part can they perform in the great schemes which are to be attempted for the deliverance of Europe?—I am afraid indeed that continental connexion is too surely the forerunner of foreign subsidy. If subsidies are to be granted, the sending our specie abroad must be the necessary consequence, and to what that may lead it is impossible to say. No man can feel more than I do the splendour of lord Nelson's victory; but while this blush of triumph sits upon the face of this country, there is a disease upon

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its vitals which must excite some alarm. This is the state of our finances. On this subject we have the result of the laborious investigations of a committee in cart loads of statements which there seems no inclination to discuss. It is a subject, however, to which our attention is immediately directed, when the measures which are to be adopted necessarily lead to subsidies. We are told that many of those powers on whom the scourge of French tyranny has fallen are so exhausted, that they have not physical resources left to enable them to throw off the yoke under which they labour. What a prospect does this open to us! What unlimited demand for subsidies and pecuniary aid of every kind from this country! The hon. gentleman made some allusions to what had been said in another place respecting the insular policy of this country, and I am sure the expressions which he quoted were not in the style by which the eminent statesman is distinguished. What the hon. gentleman means by a "snug, tight, domestic war" I cannot tell; but I am sure that the principles laid down by that person for the insular policy of this country, are the true principles of our prosperity. I have ever thought that the policy of this country was, to avoid continental connexions, and our most eminent writers have recommended this policy.

The motion was negatived.

Debate in the Commons on the Income Duty Bill.] Dec. 5. Mr. Pitt brought in the bill "to repeal the duties, imposed by an act, made in the last session, for granting an Aid and Contribution for the prosecution of the war; and to make more effectual provision for the like purpose, by granting certain duties upon Income, in lieu of the said Duties." The bill was read a first time. On the 6th, it was read a second time, and on the 7th it was committed.

Dec. 14. On the question, that the report be taken into farther consideration,

Sir *John Sinclair* said:—I arise, Sir, to oppose the motion, from the full conviction, that the present bill is so exceptionable a measure, that it is impossible, by the efforts of any committee whatever, to make it entitled to the approbation of the House. I shall endeavour, with as much brevity as possible, to explain what has occurred to me on this interesting subject. The House is fully aware, that for raising those extraordinary supplies which are necessary to defray the expenses of war, one of four measures, has been usually adopted. In some countries, a treasure has been accumulated for that purpose in time of peace; in others, the necessary supplies have been raised within the year. According to a third plan, the sums wanted have been levied by compulsive loans, of which there was lately an instance under the directorial tyranny of France. The last plan, is that of raising money by means of voluntary loans, or through the medium of what is called the funding system; a mode of raising money which some gentlemen are inclined to reprobate, because they only contemplate its defects, but which I have ever considered as the climax of financial invention, the greatest of all political discoveries, the most valuable mine that ever a nation was possessed of, and, in a peculiar manner, the source of the strength, the prosperity, and the happiness of this country. Indeed, Sir, it may be sufficient to remark, that if we had attempted to carry on our wars on any other plan, in consequence of the inability of the subject to bear the pressure of additional taxes, either those wars must have been in the highest degree unsuccessful, from the want of funds to carry them on, or the people would have been driven, by oppression and despair, into a state of insurrection; nor could we have preserved, as we have hitherto been fortunately enabled to do, amidst all the calamities of war, that best source of public prosperity, the means of industry and of re-production.

But, we are told, that we have funded too much already; that the price of stocks is low; that money cannot be borrowed in large sums, except on very disadvantageous terms; that we ought to husband the funding system; that we must pay a salvage for the protection of our property; and, above all, that we are now under the necessity of resorting to a new financial expedient, namely, that of borrowing a part, and of raising the remainder of the extraordinary supplies by taxes within the year. There can hardly be, in my opinion, a more erroneous idea. If the funding system is at all to be abandoned, instead of pursuing this miserable expedient, the result of irresolution and timidity, we ought manfully to resolve to raise, not the half, but the whole supplies within the year. By following the plan that is proposed, we shall neither enjoy the advan-

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tages of the one system, nor of the other, whilst we must feel the disadvantages of both. If all the taxes were raised within the year, the money of the kingdom would not be collected in the metropolis, for the purposes of a loan; so that there would be a greater quantity of wealth in the country, applicable to the payment of the extraordinary taxes to be imposed; whereas, if we have both a loan in London, and extraordinary contributions in the country, it is absurd to imagine, that the circulating wealth of the nation will be equally divided: hence, there must be either a deficiency of money in the country, to pay the taxes, or a want of money in the capital, to furnish the loan.

It is next contended, that the new system has already answered in practice; and to it, we are told, ought to be attributed, the present flourishing state of our public credit, and what is called the high price of stocks. There never were more groundless assertions. During the American war, the lowest price that the funds ever reached, was, in February 1782, when the 3 per cents were never lower than 53¼, though no artificial means were made use of to buoy them up by means of weekly purchases. When the bargain for the loan was concluded in April last, the 3 per cent consols were above 48; they are now at 54: Is it possible to suppose, therefore, that this plan has at all materially contributed to increase the price of stocks; the difference is 6 per cent. Can no other cause be assigned for that rise, but the measure now under contemplation? Is nothing, for instance, to be attributed to the land tax redemption bill, which, I am informed, has partially succeeded in particular districts, and the beneficial consequences of which we hear so much of on other occasions? nothing to the astonishing increase of our commercial wealth, and the improvement of our agricultural resources; and nothing to our naval victories? to which, indeed, more than to the financial measures of the right hon. gentleman, our present prosperous situation ought to be ascribed. In short, four causes are assigned for this rise of 6 per cent as suits best the convenience of the minister. Let us give each of them a fair proportion, namely, 1½ per cent. Let us suppose that we have occasion for 25 millions this year, and that we borrow the whole, instead of raising a part on the new principle, within the year, the difference, at the rate of 1½ per cent is, but 375,000*l.* and for that paltry and miserable sum, the whole nation is to be subjected to the grievous oppression of this intolerable measure.

Let us admit, however, for the sake of argument, that it is wise and politic to raise a part of the supplies within the year, and that it has been found beneficial in practice; it next becomes a matter of question, whether the assessed-tax bill of last year, is not as fair a mode of raising that contribution, as the new system that is suggested? And after all the arguments used in favour of that bill, it is a circumstance hardly to be credited, that it should now be proposed to repeal that plan and substitute another in its stead. If the members of this House in particular, were to recollect the many strong declarations which were made in its favour, from authorities they are in general accustomed to listen to with peculiar attention and respect, they would probably hesitate in regard to the adoption of a new system, for raising any part of the supplies within the year.—Indeed, the question is, whether it is not better to have some criterion, than none at all? By having a criterion, you stand some chance of preventing evasion, and, above all, you render a harsh inquisitorial disclosure of property unnecessary; but if you have none, unless the most oppressive and tyrannical system is pursued, the whole income you can expect to derive from the measure, will depend on the voluntary seal, and unfortunately, the lax morality, of the great body of the people. But if a new plan must be adopted, and if property instead of expenditure, must be attacked, it becomes a matter of nice discussion, whether the extraordinary contribution should be raised by a tax on capital, or a tax on income, or by blending the two together, which though the most complicated, yet being unquestionably the justest, ought to be preferred. What I mean is, that every man should pay, instead of 10 per cent on his income, ½ per cent on his capital, and 5 per cent on his income, by which persons who had no capital would be greatly relieved, and those who were possessed of considerable property, would pay more in proportion to their opulence, than under the system that is proposed. Almost the only objection to this plan is, the difficulty of ascertaining the value of a man's capital. But is it not the same in regard to his income, unless it arises from some fixed and

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regular stipend, and is liable to no uncertainty of deduction? Let us consider this important part of the subject in the three great lines, of a landed income, of a commercial income, and of a professional income.—A landed income may be supposed the most certain and permanent, and in some particular instances it may be so; but, in general, a person of landed property, after deducting every public tax or imposition to which he is liable, is subject to a variety of burthens. In the first place, he is frequently under the necessity of being at very heavy legal expenses for preserving his property, and he is clearly entitled to deduct those expenses, as it is proposed that the public shall avail itself of that part of his income, by taxing the gentlemen of the law. In the second place, he is under the necessity of spending money in the improvement of his estates, as in draining, fencing, building, &c. And in the third place, any person of landed property is subject to a variety of deductions in consequence of the rank he holds in the state; he is obliged to act as sheriff, as justice of the peace, and other public situations, without any recompense or emolument whatsoever; and if any plan is in agitation for building a bridge, for making a turnpike road, or forming a canal, which may ultimately prove of material consequence to the neighbourhood, a gentleman of landed property must subscribe for all such measures, unless it is intended to check by law the progress of public improvement.—It is still more difficult to ascertain the income of the commercial individual, whose capital and income, indeed, are in fact so intimately combined together, that it is impossible to separate them. The income of a commercial man, also depends upon a variety of circumstances besides his capital; it depends on the situation in which he happens to be placed, the connexions which he has formed or inherited, the talents which he employs in his business, and the industry with which he prosecutes it. Are we to tax situation? That was given up in the case of the famous shop-tax. Are we to tax the advantage derived from connexion? It would be the first time that any individual ever paid any demand to the exchequer, for having a number of friends, and probably deserving them. Are we to tax talents? It would be a strange circumstance in finance to impose burthens upon those, by whose ingenuity new arts were discovered, or the old ones improved; who contribute so essentially to enrich the nation, and who are justly accounted the surest source of its commercial prosperity. Or, above all, are we to tax industry? If so, the man that is idle and profligate will pay nothing; whereas the sober and industrious will be burthened in proportion to their exertions. Let us next consider how professional men can ascertain their incomes. To what a variety of casualties are they not exposed! They may be disabled by sickness; they may be injured by ill founded personal or even political prejudices entertained against them; or their profits may be impaired by public calamity and distress: indeed, many of them must be ruined by this bill, which must diminish, in various instances, their professional business; and all of them will be entitled to the deduction of a full third of their clear income, which every prudent professional man does usually deduct, to form a provision for himself in his old age, and a capital for his family at his death.

These circumstances prove, that it is as difficult to estimate income, as to ascertain the value of capital, and are strongly in favour of that blended system which seems to be the only just principle on which such a tax or contribution as this can be imposed. Indeed how is it possible to demand, at the same rate, from a person who has an income without a capital, and from one who has both income and capital? One person, for instance, draws his subsistence from an income of 600*l.* a year, from the profession of the law; at 10 per cent he is charged with 60*l.* to the exchequer, which he must deduct from his income. Another person has 20,000*l.* of 3 per cent consolidated annuities, producing him 600*l.* At 10 per cent he will only pay 60*l.* also, though by selling only about 120*l.* of his 3 per cents according to the price of the stocks, he pays his tax, and only loses about 3*l.* 12*s.* per annum of his income. Where then is that boasted equality, which is said to be so much in favour of this plan, and which renders it so infinitely superior to every other? On these grounds I cannot help thinking, that if the measure is at all to be adopted, it ought to be altered on the principle which I have now taken the liberty of recommending, namely, that of laying the tax partly on capital and partly on income.

Let us now, Sir, proceed to consider

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the specific plan that is submitted to our consideration in the present bill. The House must still recollect the elaborate speech, in which the right hon. gentleman laid before us a general view of the income, supposed to be enjoyed by all the various classes of the community. In some points I may differ with him; and when I heard the right hon. gentleman expressing himself with so much doubt respecting various particulars, and resting on the antiquated notions of Davenant, and the guesses of modern authorities, I could not help wishing that the right hon. gentleman had given more assistance to an institution I had the honour of suggesting; I mean, the Board of Agriculture, by whom all these points, had it been properly supported, would have been before this time, fully ascertained. It has ever been a favourite opinion with me, that no country could be well governed, unless its real situation was thoroughly known—"Ad consilium de republica dandum, caput est, nôsse rempublicam." Indeed, had not the progress of that institution been checked, by those who were regardless of the interests of the country they governed, provided they could gratify their own personal spleen and resentment, we should now have been debating, not on loose calculations and uncertain data, but on a general report on the state of the country, founded on authentic information, which it would have been in my power, before this time, to have laid upon the table of this House. But let us suppose that the calculations of the right hon. gentleman, if not perfectly just, yet are sufficiently accurate for the purposes of discussion; and that the various classes of the community, which he has enumerated, have an income of 100 per annum; yet I question much, whether they really can afford to pay any thing like so large a sum as ten millions, in the course of one year, in addition to the thirty millions, which they already yield to the exchequer. The persons who will be subjected to this new tax on income, may be divided into three classes. The first consists of those who already save a part of their income, and who, by this act, will be obliged, however reluctantly, to part with a portion of those savings which they were anxious to lay up. It is the principal object of this bill, to get at this description of individuals. But I do not think that this resource is any thing like so considerable as gentlemen imagine. If we suppose that there are 3,000 persons who enjoy, at an average, 1,000*l.* each (which, in these luxurious times, will include, I am persuaded, all the misers in the kingdom), the total income they possess will not exceed 3,000,000*l.* per annum, and the tax will not produce above 300,000*l.* Another description of persons, are those who formerly lived up to the full extent of their income, or, perhaps, beyond it, but who will now begin to save, and to reduce their establishments, in order to pay this new contribution. I am afraid this class will be a very numerous one, and that, to the full amouut they are compelled to pay to this tax on income, we shall loose in the excise and customs, and other branches of the revenue. The only remaining class consists of those who will continue to live as formerly. Perhaps, indeed, they cannot retrench, owing to the largeness of their family, their professional situations, and various other circumstances. Having neither saved the money before, nor being able to save it now, they must either deduct it from their capital (if they have any), or borrow it where they can find it.

And this leads me again to allude to the great disadvantage of blending the two systems together, namely, that of borrowing money for the public service, and of raising the supplies within the year. The consequence of a public loan is, that all the money of the kingdom not only flocks into the metropolis, but also into the hands of a particular set of individuals who job in the funds. What follows? It is evident that any private person cannot borrow money almost on any terms. Whereas, if there were no loan, the circulating wealth of the kingdom would be spread over the whole surface of the country; the loan-mongers of London would be glad to lend their money on respectable private securities, and less difficulty would be found in raising the whole of the supplies within the year, than the proportion which it is proposed, by this bill, should be levied. We shall suppose, however, that the nation is able to pay the proposed tax of 10 per cent on income; yet, when I consider the various objections which may be urged against it, some of which go to the very root of the measure, and others, which, though they affect only particular branches of it, yet are almost of equal moment,—I can scarcely think that the House will be disposed to pass such a bill into a law.

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The radical objections are three; namely, that the measure in question will promote emigration, will diminish the produce of the old taxes, and will raise the price of all the necessaries of life. There is no circumstance so likely to be apprehended from this measure, as the emigration of the industrious classes of the community. If, in addition to all the usual taxes to which the people of the country are subjected, and which are in general reckoned tolerably oppressive, persons are also made liable to a compulsive disclosure of property, which has ever been accounted so odious and vexatious a measure, and also to have that property severely taxed, it must induce great multitudes of individuals to desert a country, where they are subjected to such grievous oppression, and to find out some quiet asylum, where they may escape such rapacity. If such a circumstance were to take place, and it is evidently not impossible, nor, in my opinion improbable, it would be the source of infinite mischief to this country. If the ingenious mechanic, the industrious artisan, the adventurous manufacturer, the hardy seaman, the intelligent merchant, and the skilful husbandman, oppressed by financial exactions, are driven from this formerly happy island, what will become of the boastful power and opulence of the British nation? Some are already gone, and others are, perhaps, preparing to follow their footsteps. The passing of such a law as this, must confirm any resolution they have taken, and may banish for ever from this country, some of the most valuable subjects it can at present boast of. Another material objection is, that it will occasion a very fatal reduction in the produce of the old taxes. Many luxurious gratifications, which furnish an ample revenue to the exchequer, must be curtailed or abandoned. Many people are already considering, whether they ought, or ought not, to replenish their pipes and snuff-boxes, on which depends a branch of revenue (that on tobacco), yielding to the amount of 700,000*l.* per annum. Other articles must suffer in proportion. If the national income, as stated by the right hon. gentleman, is 100 millions, we pay about 30 millions of that sum to the exchequer at present: for which some allowance ought to have been made in his statements; and if we are reduced to the private expenditure of 60 instead of 70 millions, there must be a considerable defalcation from the 30 millions formerly paid; and if the spirit of economy is once introduced into the establishments of private families, which, I think, is likely to be the result of so violent a measure, that cold economy may continue; in which case we shall lose a permanent for a temporary advantage; and those taxes, on the produce of which depend the payment of our public creditors, and the subsistence of our fleets and armies, may become inadequate to the purpose. This is a point, in which many persons who now hear me, are deeply interested, who are thinking little at present how much they are personally concerned in these discussions.—A third radical objection is, the effect that this tax will have, in raising the price of all the necessaries of life; insomuch, that the middling and lower orders of the community will find it difficult to subsist under it. Several articles of general consumption, as salt, sugar, coals, &c. are already exorbitantly high, and must become still more so. Indeed if we severely tax those who raise or produce the necessaries of life, and those who deal in them, it is evident, that they will endeavour to throw the load off their own shoulders, and will contrive to make the unfortunate consumer pay tenfold, for the taxes to which they themselves are subjected.

I shall now proceed to state some objections of a less important nature, because they are capable of being removed; but which, at the same time, unless they can be obviated, ought to prove fatal to the measure. The first point I shall touch upon, under this head, relates to the taxing of the funds, which must alarm every one, attached to the old financial system and doctrines of this country, in opposition to the new political dogmas, which, in these days, are so boldly inculcated. By the laws, as they now stand, the interests or dividends paid to the public creditors, are protected against all charges and taxes whatsoever; but, for the first time, they are now introduced into the budget of the chancellor of the exchequer. It is said, that there is no direct tax upon the funds; that we do not intercept the money, as it goes into the pocket of the creditor; but that we only put our hands into his pocket afterwards, and inform him, whether he consents or not, he must, at his peril (the words of the precept of the commissioners are, "thereof fail not at your peril") deliver over to us, a tenth part of that sum of money, which

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we assured him, when he lent the principal, was to be exempted from all taxes and charges whatsoever. What a miserable evasion! Indeed, if this principle of indirect, and involuntary taxation is once admitted in regard to the funds, there is no saying to what height it may be carried. What is the remedy? The remedy is an easy one, and has been practised on all occasions, when the principle or the interest of the public creditor has been affected, let books be opened for receiving the names of all the creditors who assent to this new mode of holding their property, and let it go no farther than to the persons who subscribe. I trust that a very large majority of the creditors, if not the whole of them, would agree to the proposal, and voluntarily subject themselves to the new tax. At any rate, no consideration whatever ought, in my opinion, to induce this House to countenance any paltry evasion, by which its solemn faith, pledged to the public creditors, can, to the smallest possible extent, be violated.

The next point I wish to allude to, can also be remedied in the committee on the bill. It relates to the idea of taxing persons residing in this country, for the property which they possess in other parts of his majesty's dominions; for instance, in Ireland and the West Indies. This seems to me unjust in its principle; and, so far as my information reaches, without example in the financial history of this, or any other country. Both in Ireland and in the West Indies, there are separate legislatures, who enjoy the privilege of imposing taxes on the property of those who are subject to their respective jurisdiction;—a privilege which they exercise to a considerable extent. Taxing property in other places, by the authority of the British parliament, is reviving the old and exploded doctrines, which laid the foundation of the unfortunate war with America. But, Sir, I doubt, first, the right, and, secondly, the policy of this measure. In regard to the right, taxes are described to be "a portion which each subject contributes of his property, in order to secure the remainder." If this definition is a just one, and it is judge Blackstone's, we have no right to take the produce of the property of Ireland, except to defend Ireland; nor the produce of the property of Jamaica, except to defend Jamaica. In regard to the impolicy of the attempt, it is, if possible, still clearer. The effect of imposing so heavy a burthen upon persons residing here, with their property elsewhere, must be, not only to drive them out of this country, but also to prevent others from coming into it; in which case we shall not only lose the proposed exaction, but also the taxes which they pay in various other ways; and also, all the advantages we derive from the circulation of from five to six millions *per annum*.

The only other point I wish to touch upon at present, relates to the new inquisitorial power about to be established. That some regulations are necessary, in order to prevent evasion, can hardly be questioned; but that they should be so very strict, or rather so boldly tyrannical, as those which are pointed out in this bill, seems to me completely inadmissible. To tempt a man to perjury, and to subject him, at the same time, to an inquisitorial power, in order to make him condemn himself, is the height of cruelty and injustice. For my part, I think it infinitely preferable that we should lose some money, than run the risk of establishing principles abhorrent to that free constitution which this country has hitherto boasted of. This is a part of the subject, however, which will require to be discussed with peculiar anxiety in a future stage of our proceedings.

But, Sir, it may be said, that this is certainly a harsh measure, and liable to endless objections; at the same time, what can be done? Some great measure of finance is now essential for the public safety; and if you oppose this measure, you ought to suggest something else that may answer in its room. I cannot possibly subscribe to that doctrine. No member is bound to do more, than to deliver his sentiments on public measures, as they are respectively brought forward. No private individual can have access to that minute information, without which it is impossible to judge whether a measure can be prejudicial to the public interest or otherwise. But if there is any doubt regarding the best mode of raising the supplies, let a select committee of the House be appointed for the investigation of that subject, armed with authority to send for persons, papers, and records. The House and the public may be assured, if a proper select committee were appointed, that all the financial difficulties we are involved in would be removed; and surely, since we had out-of-door committees, gravely deliberating on

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the best mode of levying taxes, and who have favoured us with their public declarations on the subject of finance, there can hardly be any well-grounded objection to the measure I have suggested; and I hope, from the gestures of the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Pitt), that he approves of, and will support the idea.

It will naturally be expected, that on such an occasion, I should again take the liberty of recommending to the attention of the House, that most valuable of all resources, I mean economy. We are told by a celebrated statesman of antiquity, whose orations the right hon. gentleman has so frequently perused, and so closely imitates, I mean Cicero, "optimum, et in privatis familiis, et in republica, vectigal est, parsimonium:" and I am perfectly satisfied, there would be no difficulty, instead either of borrowing the sum in question, or raising it by means of an extraordinary and harsh contribution, to save a large proportion of it, by a rigorous spirit of retrenchment in all our establishments, both of income and expenditure.

Indeed, in my opinion, nothing could raise more the character of the nation abroad, or give more satisfaction to the people at home, than our enforcing a system of economy. It is well known, that in private life that individual is alone independent and respectable, who, without being too parsimonious, is yet attentive to his expenditure. The same is the case with nations. In regard to the people at home, the minister may suppose, as they have submitted quietly to so many burthens, that they will continue patient under more: he may find himself mistaken. By a profuse expenditure of the public money he may secure the cry of those who are preying on the vitals of the public, and, perhaps, for the moment, the assistance of corrupt and profligate men; but he will soon lose, what every wise minister would prize above all other acquisitions, the satisfaction of his own mind, the confidence of a generous sovereign, and the support of a great country.

I shall now, Sir, state some additional considerations to the House, which seem to me decisively hostile to the measure in question. The first is, the great tendency that the passing of such a bill will have, towards perpetuating the war, and promoting public profusion. As soon as it is ascertained, that ten millions of additional revenue can be raised upon the public, it will be considered as a fund for borrowing, and, at 5 per cent, would pay the interest of 200 millions of money. What a temptation to continue the war, when, perhaps, peace might be obtained on reasonable terms, and to carry it on with the most unbounded extravagance and profusion? Besides, Sir, is it possible to imagine, if this tax is once imposed, that we shall ever get rid of it? Whilst the war continues, it is certain we cannot; and if peace were to be proclaimed to-morrow, it is, at least, questionable, whether such an addition to the public revenue, would not be necessary, from the enormous peace establishment, which the circumstances of the times may occasion, at least in the opinion of those with whom cold economy is no particular favourite. And indeed, if it should not be found necessary on account of our peace establishment, such an addition to the public revenue, will be extremely convenient to assist in discharging the national debt as a commutation for other taxes, or on some such similar pretence.—It is farther necessary to observe, that this bill lays a foundation for endless vexatious exactions. The minister now very moderately requires only a tenth part of our income; but he establishes a principle, that the government of this country is entitled to demand a certain part of the income of each individual, and is also entitled to enforce that compulsive requisition, by the strictest and harshest regulations. Formerly, Sir, our principal taxes, arising from consumption, and not extending to many of the real comforts and necessaries of life, were in a manner voluntary. The exchequer was enriched, and the people were happy; and the profusion of government was fortunately checked by the conviction, that, if the taxes were carried beyond a certain length, the produce, instead of increasing, would diminish. But, Sir, if this bill passes, the whole property of the country will in future lie at the mercy of the minister; and though he now proposes to exact but a tenth part, what is to hinder him, next year, from demanding a fifth, or even a third of our respective incomes?—Allow me to ask, how long it can be expected, that either the wealth or the industry of the people can hold out, under even the apprehension and terror of such exactions?

Such, Sir, are the objections which have occurred to me against this fatal measure: one, to which the attention of the House, and of the public at large,

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cannot be too earnestly and anxiously directed. The only answer likely to be given to these ojections, and, indeed, the only arguments that can be urged in support of the measure itself, are those philippics against the French Directory, with which the right hon. gentleman and his friends are accustomed to interlard their orations, and by which they endeavour to inflame the passions, and to perplex the understandings of a partial auditory. Permit me, however, to take the liberty of asking, what have such declamations to do with the present question? I detest the ambitious projects of the French Directory as much as that right hon. gentleman or his friends, and will go as great lengths to resist them. But because the French Directory are ambitious, must the people of England be oppressed, and must we, on that account, give way, and submit, even without a struggle, to such a mischievous project as the one now under consideration; a project, Sir, which could only have been occasioned by the most unbounded profusion, could only have originated in the harshest tyrannical principles, and must either terminate in the disgrace and ruin of the bold projector, or the destruction of the nation?

I have thus, Sir, stated at some length, but not longer than the importance of the question demands, my sentiments regarding it; and I earnestly entreat, that members, divesting themselves of partiality for one individual, and of prejudice against others, will consider the subject itself dispassionately, as one on which depends the future happiness of this country. Let them resolve, instead of taking a measure of this moment blindly upon trust, because it happens to be introduced by a favourite minister, let them resolve, on the present occasion, to see with their own eyes, to hear with their own ears, and to be directed by their own judgment. Let them be assured, if they suffer this bill to pass, that it will be an event, which they themselves will severely repent of when it will unfortunately be too late, and which their posterity will have just cause to lament, as one of the greatest calamities that could possibly have befallen that country they were doomed to inherit. Let them also be assured, if such a bill as this meets with their approbation, that the British House of Commons will no longer be considered as that respectable senate, whose conduct has formerly been looked up to, with admiration and respect, both in this country and on the continent of Europe; but that it will be accounted a degraded chamber of commerce and finance, calculated solely for the purpose of registering the edicts of a minister, without knowledge of their contents, or conviction of their utility.

Mr. *Simeon* said, that the single question, in the first place, was, whether or not, considering all circumstances, it was wise to raise a large sum of money within the year?—upon which he believed there was but one opinion. The next point would be, whether it was wise to continue the assessed taxes, or adopt the present measure. He had opposed the assessed taxes last year, because he thought the plan would not answer; but he was glad the measure had been tried, because it had had the effect of ripening the public mind for the measure now before the House. He could not agree with the hon. baronet, with regard to a tax upon capital in real estate; because he thought it would be impossible to ascertain its value, or the value of the interest which each individual who enjoyed it had in that estate. The same objection would apply to some Other species of capital. As to capital in the funds, the idea of taxing it was unjust in the highest degree, inasmuch as it might be the ruin of the holder, by compelling him to sell out to an immense disadvantage. The case was quite different upon income. He then proceeded to take notice of the hints that had been thrown out upon a former occasion, relative to the taking the property to be found in corporation and church lands, for the use of the state. He hoped that would never be deliberately proposed in that House. Corporations were extremely useful for the purpose of administering local justice. As to the church lands, he warned the House of the effect of such a measure in another country. The clergy were the great prop of the state, by the influence they had upon the morals of the people; when that prop was taken away, the building must fall. Gentlemen said that this measure was hard. What was the hardship? It was not in the tax; it was in the cause of the tax. That cause was the war; and hardship was to be judged of by comparison. Would we change condition with any other part of Europe? He knew of no better way of discussing the policy of this measure, than by looking at the effect it was likely to have on the price of the articles of life. Would

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they rise in proportion to the sum raised; which must be the case when a loan was made? By no means; for as it affected every individual alike, there was no chance of charging more upon any article of trade now than formerly. As to the probability of emigration he had not any of the apprehensions of the hon. baronet. This plan affected no man whose income was under 60*l.* a year; and therefore it was not likely to affect the price of labour. A man whose income was 200*l.* in this country, whether by trade or otherwise, was not very likely to emigrate. Where would they go to? Would they go to France? or would they cross the Atlantic? He professed himself an enemy to all declamation upon this subject. Mischief might be produced by calling this an inquisitorial measure. Many honest people, for want of being better informed, associated ideas to words very different from the meaning of gentlemen who used them in that House. Thus, for instance, when the word inquisition was uttered, a great part of the public annexed to it the idea of racks and tortures. So again, when a surveyor was called a spy, the public annexed mean and dishonest ideas to that office. Our enemies had made this measure necessary, for their object was avowedly the destruction of this country.

Mr. *M. A. Taylor* said, that if the chancellor of the exchequer could satisfy him that this measure would be attended with none of the inconveniences he was going to state, he would certainly give *him* his vote; for he had no fixed hatred against the right hon. gentleman, nor had he any pistol in his pocket to shoot the minister—a fate that was said to have befallen another great man, lately in another part of the world, for attempting to raise a contribution among the people, The first objection he had to urge against this measure was, that it would cause a general disclosure of property. It was indeed said, that the state of each individual's property should be kept a secret; but how was this secrecy to be kept up? Did not every man give his answer to the tax-gatherer at the door? Any person in the village in which a man lived might know the state of his property. How was this money collected? By the common tax-collector. Was it not childish to say that any secrecy could accompany such a proceeding? This appeared to him to be a measure that would subject merchants to monstrous inconveniences. In some cases, speculation was not only indulged, but constituted part of the wealth, or rather was the mean whereby a man procured wealth in certain situations in commerce. He thought that this measure would affect a number of persons in this respect. For instance, if a merchant paid 10 per cent on 10,000*l.* and it appeared that he lived in a very splendid style, he owned he should not like a bill of such a man for a large sum of money, because he knew that 10,000*l.* a year would not support very great splendor, and the merchant would have no means of concealing this. Again, to take the case of a private gentleman, was the House unacquainted with the case of some gentlemen of property, who, in the early part of their lives, had been imprudent, and had brought incumbrances upon their estates; would such persons like, that these things should be disclosed? And yet such must be the case under the provisions of this bill. Many individuals might have expectations from rich relations, which expectations would be all disappointed, when the cautious person came to see the imprudence of the object of his intended bounty.—He knew how the case stood already with regard to those who were employed by government to examine into people's fortunes; they were employed to look how far people were accurate in the payment of their taxes, and whether they were fairly assessed, or not. These persons went round at random, and surcharged, without caring what they do. The mischief of this was in many cases monstrous. For instance, he himself lived 160 miles from London; suppose, while he was in the country, he was unfairly surcharged in London; he should have no remedy, but by appeal before the commissioners in London; the expense of his coming to town to obtain redress, would amount to more than the sum he was overcharged, and thus he must submit to be cheated, for he had no adequate remedy for the evil.—Another objection he had to this measure was of a constitutional nature. The genius of the constitution of England was, that a man's property was sacred. It was upon the strength of that principle that every man's house was called his castle, and that the excise laws had always been held so odious in England. If excise laws were odious what was to be thought of the present bill? An excise-

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man came to a man's dwelling to see whether he had taken into, or sent out of his house, some particular articles, without having previously paid a given sum to the revenue; but here a spy comes, not only into the House, but opens the bureau of every man, and becomes acquainted with his most secret concerns. A man must show to this spy his bills, his notes, his bonds, and all his securities. This was monstrous. He knew that a tax on income had the appearance, upon a glance at it, of being an equal tax; but he would ask, what sort of equality there was between 10 per cent upon income merely, and 10 per cent upon that income which is the produce of a capital? There was another species of property which was of a peculiar nature, he meant that which belonged to a church establishment. He was a friend to a church establishment; he was of opinion that the clergy were very serviceable to every community where they were known, for they instructed the mass of the people in their duty. He would ask, whether any persons having a 1,000*l.* a year in the church, ought to pay the same sum as a person of a 1,000*l.* a year landed property? Besides this, he objected to the scale of duty. It was said, that men might reduce their expenses, in order to enable them to pay this impost. A gentleman of only 1,000*l.* a year could not reduce. He considered a tax upon income as a tax upon industry, and such as would make men unwilling to labour. They would argue with themselves thus; why should we labour when government runs away with the effect of it? If this bill was supposed chiefly to affect the rich, it was a mistake. It did not hurt the rich man, it only made him curtail his expenses. And who suffered? The industrious poor who were employed by him.

The *Solicitor General* said, that if when the legislature imposed a tax, they were to wait until they found one which was perfectly popular, he was afraid they would wait long enough: for all the observation he had been led to make, induced him to believe that most people were inclined to evade the payment of taxes. When it was proposed to repeal the assessed tax bill, and to substitute this mode of collection, the principle was preserved, though the means were altered. The experience of last year had fully proved the wisdom of raising a considerable part of the supplies within the year. The hon. baronet must know, that the novelty was the introduction of the funding system, and not the raising the supplies within the year. The system of borrowing and funding certainly afforded greater facilities, but still it ought not to be carried to too great an extent. It seemed to be just upon every principle, that we ought for a time to pay more than usual, rather than throw the whole burthen upon posterity. The principle of the measure of last year was this, that a tenth part of the income of every person should be contributed. The question was, how that tenth part was to be ascertained? It was imagined that the extent of a man's income might be ascertained by the amount of his taxes. On this supposition the tax of last year was adopted. Wherever the operation of the tax was such as to take more than one-tenth from any individual, then the bill pointed out the means by which he might obtain relief. But in those cases where the assessed taxes did not take one-tenth, the individual could make up the deficiency by voluntary contributions. Many, however, had taken very improper means to evade the payment of the tax. He was aware that the present plan would not, in every instance, produce the tenth of a man's income. But if they could not obtain perfect equality, they ought to adopt such measures as seemed most likely to produce that effect. This was the object of the present bill. He was surprised the hon. baronet was an advocate for taxing capital, because it was almost universally agreed, that income and not capital, was the proper object of taxation. Taxes upon capital had been attempted, but it was found that they produced great inequality. In the beginning of the reign of queen Anne, an attempt was made to tax capital. The provisions of that act were infinitely more objectionable than the present; but it never was suggested at that period that they were unconstitutional. It certainly was found that they were not effectual, as far as they related to capital; but as far as they related to income, they proved to be effectual: the result was, that the tax, as far as it affected capital, was given up; but, with respect to income, it was retained. It must be obvious, that an attempt to tax capital, with respect to land, would be wholly impracticable. How would it be possible for commissioners to examine into the various kinds of estates and the different interests which different people

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might have in the land? How could they distinguish between settled and unsettled estates? If they were to tax the tenants for life according to his interest, then the reversioners would not be taxed at all. In many cases, those who least deserved it would be most favoured; and on the other hand, those who had the greatest title to indulgence would receive the least. It was therefore obvious, that to attempt to tax the capital of land would be impracticable; or, if it could be effected, would be productive of the greatest inequalities. But if the principle of taxing capital was applied to money, the inequality would be much greater, because the value of money depended, in a great degree, upon the mode in which it was employed. A sum of money in the hands of one man, might be infinitely more valuable than an equal sum in the hands of another. But a tax upon capital would make no such distinctions; two persons possessing the same sum, must pay the same tax, though the value of the capital might be five times greater to one than to the other. He did not mean to say that a tax upon income was, in every instance, free from these objections. It was not possible to devise any mode of taxation which should operate equally upon all. But a tax which would take, as nearly as possible, the same proportion of income from all, would be the most desirable one that could be imposed. One great advantage arising from this mode of taxation was, that that which was raised came into the public coffer, and had not the effect of raising the price of any article of consumption. It would be an extremely difficult task to discover other means by which the same beneficial effects could be produced with as little inconvenience.

Sir. *W. Young* gave his entire assent to the principle of the bill. In considering the propriety of agreeing to this, or any other mode of taxation, it was always necessary to bear in mind the important objects for which we were contending. It was a circumstance which contributed much to the happiness and prosperity of this country, that all the links in the chain of its society ran naturally one into the other; that it was impossible to mark where one rank of society began, and where another ended. It was upon this principle that he had found fault with the measure of last year, because there were many people wholly exempted from its operation. It was highly unjust to say, that one set of men should pay a tax because their property was of a certain description, and another should not. The most valuable property a man could have was enjoyed equally by all the subjects of this empire, namely, the protection of his property, his liberty, and every thing that was dear to him. It appeared to him, that the least valuable part of a man's property was that which he carried in his pocket. Where, therefore, all were concerned, all should come within the reach of the tax. This was the effect of this tax. It was urged, in opposition to this measure, that it would have been better to adhere to the funding system. Before this opinion was implicitly adopted, it should be recollected that we were a commercial people, and that great care should be taken that our wealth should not be diverted from our commerce, to which we owed all our greatness into other channels. Now, the natural consequence of pushing the funding system to an extreme, would be to raise the interest of money to a degree that would be extremely dangerous; because if men could get an extravagant interest for money, without exposing it to the risks of commerce, all commercial enterprise would be checked. One of the strongest objections urged against this measure was, that it would compel a disclosure of every man's private affairs. Now in the West Indies, a man could not have a bond or note without its being registered, and consequently to a certain degree disclosing his property; and yet he did not know that it had ever produced any prejudicial effects.—Another objection urged against this bill was, that it invested the persons who were to collect the tax with inquisitorial power; but this objection was not more valid than the others; because, if every man was allowed to give in a statement of his property just as he pleased, the consequence would obviously be, that very little money would be raised. He by no means saw how this inquiry could be so painful to a man's feelings. Who were the persons by whom the inquiry was to be made? Why, just that description of persons to whom every man voluntarily submitted the investigation of questions respecting his property and his life. If, then, they were fit to be trusted with such important concerns as property and life, upon what ground could any man be afraid of being injured by their prejudices? If it was necessary to raise a large sum of money, and coercive means

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were also necessary, the question was, whether the means now proposed were not the best that could be suggested? The principle of the bill should have his entire support; because he was convinced that we had now arrived at the true principle of taxation, in which all persons were called upon to contribute in proportion to their means.

Mr. *Ellison* said, that the principle of this measure appeared to him exactly the same as that of last year; but he liked the means now adopted for carrying that principle into effect infinitely better than the criterion of assessed taxes. It would effect that which he was anxious for, namely, that every man should pay alike, because every man was equally interested. What analogy there was between this tax and a requisition, he could not conceive. No minister in this country would ever dare to attempt a requisition. It was rather extraordinary, that a measure to which the people gave their assent by means of their representatives, should be for a moment compared with a lawless requisition.

Sir *Francis Baring* did not rise to oppose the object of the bill. He was not, however, without his objections to several parts of the plan. It was as liable to evasion, and even more so, than that of last year. A learned gentleman had made some distinction between a tax upon income and a tax upon capital. With regard to that on income, he seemed to think there could be no evasion. In some measure the learned gentleman might be right; but with regard to trade, he certainly was in the wrong, for in commerce the bill would be liable to evasions and frauds without end. A man might have a large income in trade, yet his property could not be ascertained. Even could it be come at, there were occasions where it should not be touched. There was nothing that should have a stronger claim on the protection of government, than creative talents in mercantile pursuits. Where industry was engaged in accumulating property, it should be encouraged, not cramped nor dispirited. The industrious and enterprizing should be protected; at least he should not be molested while engaged in producing a capital. When it was produced, then let it be taxed; but while he was engaged in the pursuit, no inspector should pry into his affairs. The manufacturing and trading part of the community would be able to evade the bill still more effectually: as their property was generally in stock, the manufacturers, &c. will be induced to undervalue it, and thus avoid the tax altogether. From what had passed at the Bank yesterday, he was induced to put the following question:—Were dividends liable to be taxed, or only the profits upon dividends? What then, in either case, was to become of the profits of corporate bodies?

Mr. *W. Smith* said, that if it were the object of the measure merely to raise ten millions within the year, as far as that was its object he was ready to agree to it. His objections did not lie against the sum; on the contrary, so far he thought it a wise plan. It was asserted, that the principle of the bill was the same as that of the assessed taxes last year. As far as it went to raise a certain portion of the supplies within the year, undoubtedly it was the same; as it related, however, to the criterion by which the means of contributing were to be ascertained, it differed widely from that of last year. The criterion established last year was a voluntary criterion; a man might think himself able to spend a certain sum of money, but his expenditure was at his option. Now his income could not be said to be a voluntary criterion; for over it he had no control. An hon. gentleman had said that we should all put a hand to the plough, and free the bill from its inconveniences; but if that hon. gentleman thought the bill unconstitutional, unjust, oppressive, cruel, and he might add, fraudulent, would he then assist in forcing it on the nation? Such was his opinion of the bill; he could not therefore put a hand to the plough. Upon what principle of political economy could they pronounce that measure to be wise, honest, politic, and just, which would impose an equal tax upon indolence and industry? But this the present bill went directly to do. One man, for instance, might draw a dividend from the funds of 500*l.* per annum, the whole of which he had acquired by the exertions of his industry; while the other enjoyed the same sum without its ever having cost him any labour. This bill would assess both equally. Was not, then, industry confounded with indolence? He hoped the House would not permit the drone and the bee, the rich and the poor, to be thrown promiscuously together under the pressure of a cruel, oppressive, and indiscriminating tax. The ini-

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quity of this measure would appear more strongly to the House, when shown in the words of an able writer, whose name he had the honour to bear. The opinion of Mr. Adam Smith would bear him out in his assertion. This valuable writer says: "Capitation taxes, if it is attempted to proportion them to the fortune or revenue of each contributor, become altogether arbitrary. The state of a man's fortune varies from day to day, and without an inquisition more intolerable than any tax, and renewed at least once every year, can only be guessed at—his assessments therefore must, in most cases, depend upon the good or bad humour of his assessors, and must therefore be altogether arbitrary and uncertain." The next object he would touch upon, was the profits arising from agriculture and trade, and this was evidently an object not directly taxable. The same author adduced a variety of reasons why it should not be taxed directly. "This profit," he says, "is the compensation, and in most cases it is no more than a very moderate compensation, for the risk and trouble of employing the stock. The employer must have this compensation, otherwise he cannot, consistently with his own interest, continue the employment." Here, therefore, was industry to be recompensed, and not confounded with indolence. The author next proceeded to show, that "the quantity and value of the land which any man possesses can never be a secret, and can always be ascertained with great exactness. But the whole amount of the capital stock which he possesses is almost always a secret, and can scarce ever be ascertained with tolerable exactness. It is liable, besides, to almost continual variations. A year seldom passes away, frequently not a month, sometimes scarce a single day, in which it does not rise or fall more or less. An inquisition into every man's private circumstances, and an inquisition which, in order to accommodate the tax to them, watched over all the fluctuations of his fortune, would be a source of such continual and endless vexation as no people could support." England, however, seemed doomed to support it; though he could not well imagine that Englishmen would tamely submit to a system of taxation that discouraged industry, and favoured indolence, and which put a surveyor, or a spy over every man's property. But it is said there was no inquisitorial power, because we might make a declaration: to what, however, did this declaration amount, according to the same author?—He says, "In all countries a severe inquisition into the circumstances of private persons has been carefully avoided. At Hamburgh every inhabitant is obliged to pay to the state one-fourth per cent of all that he possesses, and as the wealth of the people of Hamburgh consists principally in stock, this tax may be considered as a tax upon stock. Every man assesses himself, and, in the presence of the magistrate, puts annually into the public coffer a certain sum of money, which he declares upon oath to be one-fourth per cent of all that he possesses, but without declaring what it amounts to, or being liable to any examination upon that subject." The disclosure of circumstances, we were also told was not to be dreaded. Yet hear Adam Smith: "Merchants engaged in the hazardous projects of trade, all tremble at the thoughts of being obliged at all times to expose the real state of their circumstances. The ruin of their credit and the miscarriage of their projects, they foresee, would too often be the consequence. A sober and parsimonious people, who are strangers to all such projects, do not feel that they have occasion for any such concealment."

Mr. *Pitt* said:—Sir; Impressed as I am with the conviction that there never was a subject of greater importance agitated within these walls, I should not have thought it incumbent upon me in the present stage of the business, to have troubled you with any observations, were there not some points which have been touched upon this night, which I am desirous, as soon as possible, to place in their proper point of view. What has been urged by some gentlemen, while it could not be considered fairly as argument, was so calculated to excite prejudice, and to beget misconception, that it demands some degree of notice. It is a satisfaction to me to find that the propriety of raising a certain part of the supplies within the year has in general been conceded. If we can judge from what has appeared to-night, no one, except the hon. baronet who opened the debate is disposed to contest the principle. I am thus relieved from the necessity of detaining the House with any argument upon that subject, or saying any thing in reply to one solitary antagonist by whom the principle was denied. Whatever

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authority may belong to that individual member, and no man has more, the worthy baronet himself seemed to rest entirely upon that authority, as he did not add a single argument in support of his position.—There were some others, however, who, admitting the benefits which might be derived, both in present vigour and permanent resources, from the plan of raising great part of the supplies within the year, yet thought themselves at liberty peremptorily, and impatiently, to shut the door against all improvement, and to oppose all farther deliberation. Confessing the necessity of vigorous efforts for the salvation of the country, they do not wait to reject the measure upon any ground of invincible objection, but they come forward to resist it in the very outset, previous to a mature examination of its details, and a sincere endeavour to correct its provisions.

The hon. gentleman who spoke last approves of the principle of raising a considerable part of the supplies within the year, but he declares himself an enemy to any plan of rendering that principle effectual by a general tax. The House will, no doubt, think this a most valuable concession of the hon. gentleman. If it be necessary for the effort which we are called upon to make, if it be essential to the future prosperity of the empire to obtain that supply which is requisite for the vigorous prosecution of the contest, it is evident that it must be obtained by a sudden tax immediately productive. If the hon. gentleman admits that such an increase of the taxes on consumption as would produce ten millions within the year is impracticable, it follows that there is no other mode but a tax upon property, so far as it can be discovered. We must lay the contribution, then, either on capital or income. From this general operation, however, the hon. gentleman would exempt all those whom he is pleased to call exclusively the useful classes, and lay the whole of the weight on what he calls the useless class. In the class of useless the hon. gentleman has thought proper to rank all the proprietors of land, those men who form the line which binds and knits society together—those on whom, in a great measure, the administration of justice, and the internal police of the country depends;—those men from whom the poor receive employment, from whom agriculture derives its improvement and support, and to whom, of course, commerce itself is indebted for the foundation on which it rests. Yet this class the hon. gentleman thinks proper to stigmatize as useless drones, of no estimation in the eyes of society. When the consequences with which this light flippant theory, the offspring of mere temporary unthinking policy, would be attended are fairly considered, the hon. gentleman will find that his distinction between useful and useless classes is as little founded in truth, as the practical system he founds upon it would be consistent with the general interest of those whom he thinks entitled to peculiar favour. The question then is, whether capital or income be the proper object of contribution? The hon. gentleman says that capital is the criterion which ought to be adopted in the case of the commercial man, and income where it is derived from land. Taking for granted, that the principles of the hon. gentleman were well founded, no less than three-fourths of the whole income liable to contribution is calculated to arise from this source. Even upon his own argument, then, he ought not to consider this measure as so incurable as to refuse going into the committee. If he is sincere in his profession of desire to facilitate the raising of a considerable part of the supplies within the year, why should he refuse to proceed farther in a measure which is at least capable of embracing three-fourths of his object; and in other parts susceptible of alteration and improvement? If, however, what has been so universally recognised as important to be done, is to be done effectually, and the great consideration is, on which of these leading objects it will be most advantageous to the public, and least inconvenient to the classes of contribution to impose this general and comprehensive tax, I am afraid, that to that very plan, which he himself thinks preferable, those objections on which he rested the desponding hope, that the country neither could, nor would submit to the measure, would apply with aggravated force. Every objection, which he so vehemently urged against the danger of disclosure, will apply to those new theories of policy on which he would act. The hon. gentleman says, he is against disclosure. How, then, is he to ascertain the amount of that commercial capital, the profits of which he thinks might justly be made to contribute? Would he be contented with that loose declaration, which experience has proved to be so fa-

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vourable to evasion? Would he recognise the justice of a principle, which he would utterly nullify by the provisions he recommends to carry it into effect? What then does he do to invigorate those extraordinary efforts which are necessary for our success in a contest, which has long been considered to be connected with our existence? The greater part of the hon. gentleman's speech was founded upon objections to the provisions of the bill; and many of his objections were either utterly unfounded in any thing it contains, or of such a nature as to admit of being corrected in the committee. To the main objection, it may easily be answered, that the hon. gentleman assumes what is not in the bill. I allude to what was stated respecting the character and duties of the surveyor to be appointed under the bill. I will not recapitulate the odious description which the hon. gentleman applied to the persons who were to act in this capacity. What is the tendency of such invective, but to bring into discredit those officers under the revenue, without which it could not be collected? The hon. gentleman says that the surveyor is at liberty to surcharge to any amount, and pending the appeal to which this surcharge gives rise, the tax will continue to be levied on the whole of the demand, including the surcharge. What is the remedy which the hon. gentleman discovers for this? He tells us, that the discussion of the appeal might be rendered so intricate as to consume six, or even twelve months. This objection he urges triumphantly, at the very time too that he states it to be the mode which a person surcharged will adopt for his relief, at the very moment when he is compelled to acquiesce in the payment of a surcharge, from which he takes care that it shall be impossible for the commissioners of appeal to relieve him! Such an argument is the consequence which is stated. In fact, however, it so happens, that no such grievance can exist. The surveyor's surcharge is not acted upon in the first instance, unless confirmed by the commissioners. The surveyor has no discretion whatever to add to the charge on which the contributor shall be compelled to pay. The objections of the hon. gentleman, instead of operating against the bill *in toto*, demonstrate the necessity of going into the committee. As to the general declamation upon the character and function of the surveyor, whom some gentlemen are pleased to consider in the odious light of a spy, it is a matter for the committee to adjust the powers and the duties with which he shall be entrusted. Is this, however, any argument for the immediate rejection of the bill? Does the hon. gentleman really think that no precaution whatever ought to be taken to avoid those scandalous evasions which there is but too much reason to expect may be attempted? But it is maintained by the hon. gentleman, that no evasions have taken place to defeat the operation of the assessed tax bill which passed last session. He is peculiarly fortunate in the instances which have occurred to him, with respect to the patriotism of his friends; but he has rated their zeal beyond the mark. It is rather singular that he has not taken the opportunity of extolling their liberality in subscribing to the voluntary contributions. The observations made by the friends of government, are, however, of a very different kind. His must have been a chosen circle, yet others were as large as the hon. gentleman's, before the new lights broke in upon him. But notwithstanding the assertion, I must say, that great and notorious instances of the concealment of property have occurred, the check provided by the legislature has been found insufficient to produce any adequate end, and the declarations which have been given in, have, on various occasions, eluded the expected operation of the act. Is it not then a matter of great concernment—is it not a subject worthy of grave deliberation, to consider what means may be devised to render the measure proposed as efficient as possible to the public service? The surveyor is not to be a person on whose discretion any assessment is to depend: he is to *assist* the commissioners with *information*, and to discharge that duty which his oath prescribes, of preventing evasion where it might be within his knowledge that it was attempted. It is said in proof of the importance of the surveyor's office, that they have great influence with the commissioners in other matters where the revenue is concerned; but, when the character of the commissioners is taken into view, this remark will prove that, instead of that profligate, worthless class, which the hon. gentleman describes, they are men who recommended themselves by the propriety of their conduct and the performance of their duty. But, says the hon. gentleman, the surveyor is the only man whom we con-

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sider as likely to be bound by his oath. Yet is there no distinction between the cases? Is the temptation to perjure the same? Has the man who is sworn to the performance of his duty, the same reason to disregard it, which the man has who is endeavouring to avoid the payment of money to the state? What, then, is required?—A *particular* statement of income, to guard against the evasion which was practised when a *general* statement was only required. What is it but the means of correcting those frauds which every man's observation but the hon. gentleman's had ascertained to be prevalent? The hon. gentleman speaks, too, of the surveyor's power to extract from the books of public bodies. Here the hon. gentleman, from not attending to the bill itself, is entirely mistaken. The surveyor has no such power; he is to make extracts from, and to have access to, the public books, to which at present even any person may easily procure access for any purpose, even of mere curiosity. Might not any body now procure information how much any mercantile house possesses in the three per cents? The surveyor, then, is authorized to suggest doubts, to collect information; but he has no right whatever to ask questions of the party surcharged, or to have any inspection of his books. Does not the hon. gentleman, however, perceive that all these points are proper subjects for consideration in a committee, where it is perfectly competent to move any alteration which gentlemen may think necessary?

As to the criterion of the general tax, it has likewise been objected to the details, that the application is unequal in respect to the nature of income, its duration, &c. Although I do not intend to enter so much into the discussion of the provisions of the bill, I am anxious to remove those erroneous conceptions which are entertained upon this subject. Here I cannot help remarking, that the arguments of the hon. gentleman, on this branch, suppose that it is necessary to correct the inequalities which distinguish the mode in which all taxes are imposed. If such be the sentiment of the hon. gentleman, his objection goes a great deal farther than the bill before the House. The inequalities of which he complains, arise out of the nature of society, and the distribution of its rank, and the classification of its property. If he attempts to remedy what he in this considers as urgent, he will attempt something which has never yet been done by any system of taxation, something which springs from theories of legislation, neither founded in wisdom nor justified by experience. I proceed to explain my meaning more fully. The hon. gentleman says, that if two persons have each 500*l.* per annum, one of which derives his income from land, the other from industry, they ought not to be both taxed equally at 50*l.* He assumes, that each having 450*l.* a year left, the impost is unequal. What does the new tax do? Are they not left in relation to each other precisely as they were before? The tax creates no new inequality. The justice or injustice remain precisely as they were. To complain of this inequality is to complain of the distribution of property; it is to complain of the constitution of society. To attempt to remedy it, would be to follow the example of that daring rabble of legislators in another country, from whom the hon. gentleman borrowed some of his political principles, and which though he now reprobates, he still seems inclined to follow up. To think of taxing these two species of incomes in a different ratio, would be to attempt what the nature of society will not admit; what has never been practised in the course of four thousand years. But on what foundation does this principle, which the hon. gentleman has broached, rest? Where is the clear inequality on which he so vehemently insists? Is the industry of the artist, the manufacturer, the mechanic, less the creature of the protection of law, less involved in the great contest in which we are engaged, less likely to be overthrown in any disasters of the state, than the income which arises from land? I heard, with satisfaction, the argument of an hon. baronet behind me, though I cannot, perhaps, go along with him to the extent to which he carried it; of this, certainly I am sure, that if all classes in this country are not strictly equally sharers in the advantages which the constitution of this country affords, there are none who ought not to contribute in proportion to their means for the public defence in a quarrel, in which the comforts and the happiness of all are so deeply involved, unless when the compassion of the legislature forbears to extend the scale of taxation to those who are in the lowest class of income. The principle of the hon. gentleman then is entirely unfounded. In imputing to him that extravagant principle, which strikes

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at the whole distribution of property in society, I am sure I do nothing which his own arguments do not justify; nor do I think I am mistaken in stating those principles, for the hon. gentleman was particularly careful to repeat his monstrous propositions over and over again, in proportion as he saw that they were disgusting to the feelings of the House. That industry ought to be encouraged and promoted, is a sentiment which nobody will dispute. It should be remembered, however, that this, among many others, is a case in which virtue is its own reward. What, then, is the true state of the argument? An income of 500*l.* from land may be equal to about 15,000*l.*, so that a man is contented to take three per cent for his capital. In the funds, according to circumstances, and in the different funds, a man may have five, or even six per cent. If he lays out his capital in trade, and adds to it his own industry, he gets from 10 to 15 per cent. Now, if you leave the proportion undisturbed, what is it that forms the encouragement to lay out money in trade and manufactures, but the improved produce derived from industry? This is the incentive which enflames enterprise, and stimulates ingenuity. Allow that order, under which your commerce and your arts have risen to such an unexampled height of prosperity to remain undisturbed, and you preserve that incentive, that encouragement, and that reward, on which industry depends. I much doubt, indeed, whether any table which the hon. gentleman could form from all the new political lights which he ever received, could lay the foundation more secure or more permanent for arts, commerce, and every kind of exertion, than that on which they have grown so great, and flourished so long.

There is another argument of great authority, which gentlemen employ; an argument which for some time past, I have seen much insisted upon in some of the newspapers—that this was a tithe, and that all tithes are unfavourable alike to industry. The argument has no application to the present case. The tenth, which this bill imposes, is a tenth of the clear profits after the expenses of labour have been deducted. The more I have thought upon this particular subject and upon taxation in general, the more am I convinced not only of the futility, but the danger of any attempt, by the distribution of imposts, to make any difference in that order which the nature of society has already established. It is necessary to observe the arrangements which have been already formed, and to accommodate the proportion of taxes to the classes of property which have already been marked. To proceed beyond this, is to dissolve all established principles, and to overthrow the fabric of society which time and the progress of accumulation have reared. Another curious inference may be drawn from the observations made against the hardships incurred by persons possessed of life estates, of temporary ones, and of those who receive the rewards of laborious employments. It happens singularly enough, that the public offices held under government, uniting in their nature profits derived from labour and temporary estates, are included in the operation of the bill. Now, Sir, these gentlemen who oppose it, have proposed on former occasions, as a great resource for the national expenditure, that all those offices should be made to contribute largely to the public service—I do not mean sinecures, for they wished to suppress them. The calculations furnished this night are not more exact than those of the hon. baronet on that occasion; the references certainly were not those of the board of agriculture; but the hon. baronet had made the prodigious discovery, that if all the public offices were placed on a reduced establishment, and others suppressed, the sum of ten millions would be saved to the public. I was highly pleased with the project, and sincerely wished for the execution of it; but I was always unfortunately stopped in every attempt I made to go on with it, by finding that the entire expenses of the public offices only amounted to one-tenth of the prodigious saving which was so confidently held out. The hon. baronet's attention has been taken up with agricultural studies and military tactics, or he might have known, that a committee appointed for the express purpose, had made a very different calculation. We have already had a committee of finance, which has discharged the important duties attached to it in the most satisfactory manner—a committee which, except that the hon. baronet was not a member of it, is perfectly to the mind of every gentleman in this House, and many of its suggestions for economy and regulation have been carried into effect with great advantage.—From this digression, however,

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into which I have been carried by the subject of offices, I now return.

I was stating with how little favour the hon. gentleman and his friends formerly considered annuities for life in the case of laborious offices; let us now see how their old opinions tally with their new, namely this branch of income was most obnoxious to taxation, now it is to be most favoured. The hon. gentleman does not think that a great increase of taxes on consumption would be more advantageous than a general tax on all income. Is the inequality or the hardship greater now than it was, or than it would be, should taxes of consumption be increased? If not, then the hon. gentleman is only quarrelling with this tax, because it is not so unequal as the former mode of contribution had been. This plan, which is more general, more comprehensive, which embraces a great deal of property which formerly eluded taxation, and by consequence, distributes the burthen more fairly, is considered inadmissible. But I am told, that a large sum within the year cannot be raised by increasing the existing taxes on consumption. What is the consequence? Does not the hon. gentleman compel us to resort to the more expensive expedient of raising money by loans, instead of adopting a plan more extensive in its effect, while it provides for the redemption of what it is necessary to borrow, without that load of permanent taxes, which the funding system renders indispensable? But, it is said that a tax on capital is preferable. Was it not proved, however, that from the state of landed property, not more than one-third of it is now in the hands of persons who could be called upon to contribute, so that two-thirds would be placed wholly out of reach for any purpose of present exertion? What is the great object of the measure before the House? Is it not to raise within the year, from what constitutes the means of individuals within the year, such a proportion as is deemed necessary for the exigencies of the state, and the magnitude of the present crisis? Do you wish to avoid burthening the public with a loan? What advantage would you derive from it, however, if individuals mortgage their estates? Would not the aggregate of private loans encumber the mass of national wealth as much as if the nation contracted the obligation? The object then is, to make the annual means of individuals applicable to a supply within the year.

It is objected still, that it is unjust that the man who has an annuity or an income, the fruit of his labour, should pay in the proportion of a man who has the same revenue from fixed property. This objection is altogether a fallacy. A permanent estate, which is represented as never dying, and, as it were, the property of a man after his death, contributes on every exigency which may occur; the income from labour and industry is extinguished; it contributes but once! it is no longer the property of the same person: while the other, which is considered as the same property, is subject to renewed demands. This reasoning may be thought refined; but the answer is justly applicable in the case where the reason, why fixed property should contribute more, is founded on its supposed permanency, in opposition to the fleeting character of the other. How then is it possible to discriminate between the various kinds of property; or to enter into the details which could alone enable you to apply any scale of exemption, without an investigation more oppressive, a disclosure more extensive, than any thing which the bill permits? How much safer is it to submit to those inequalities which are the lot of man, and which it is not the business, nor is it in the power, of schemes of finance to correct! Could we even indulge the wish to correct these inequalities, which arise out of the very nature of society, is this the legislative remedy? Let us then forbear to attempt what is perhaps beyond the power of human legislation to correct. It is an enterprize that would hurry us far beyond our depth, and lead to consequences far more extensive than we can foresee, and might produce an overthrow of all establishments, and all regular order, which it is impossible to contemplate without apprehension. The principle of argument that goes to remedy this supposed evil, belongs to the school of dangerous innovation which we ought not for a moment to indulge. The consequence of this tax then will be, that whoever contributes a tenth of his income under this bill, will have a tenth less to spend, to save, or to accumulate. At the end of the war those who shall have contributed will be no poorer; they will only be to the extent of it less increased in riches than they would have been. The advantages of it are in a particular manner in favour of those on whom it will fall, instead of accumulating taxes on consumption, as it will bring all income

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to contribute more equally, and include a great deal of that which, in the hands of those who spend less than their income, escapes contribution altogether. Laying aside the proud idea of the vigour, permanence, and renewing energy which this measure secures, there is one case which, with a view to that class who are really willing to save for the benefit of those for whom they are bound to provide, makes some modification. It is in favour of those who have recourse to that easy, certain, and advantageous mode of providing for their families by insuring their lives. In this bill, as in the assessed taxes, a deduction is allowed for what is paid on this account. Such is the general view of the merits of this important question. It is one which has engaged much of my serious attention, and I am far from presuming that it has already attained the perfection of which it is capable. The inequalities objected to it are not peculiar to its nature; they arise from our social state itself, and the correction of that order we cannot, as we ought not, attempt to alter. It would be a presumptuous attempt to derange the order of society, which would terminate in producing confusion, havock, and destruction, and with a derangement of property, terminate in the overthrow of civilized life.

The question being put, "That the said Report be now taken into further consideration;" the House divided:

Tellers,

Yeas	Lord Hawkesbury Mr. Simeon	- - - - - -	183
Noes	Mr. M. A. Taylor Mr. William Smith	- - - -	17

The Report was then taken into further consideration, and the bill was recommitted.

List of the Minority.

Baring, sir F.	North, D.
Burdett, sir F.	Plumer, W.
Brogden, J.	Sinclair, sir J.
Combe, H. C.	St. John, St. A.
Denison, W. J.	Tierney, G.
Grey, C.	Western, C. C.
Hobhouse, B.	Wigley, E.
Hussey, W.	TELLERS.
Jekyll, J.	Smith, W.
Nicolls, J.	Taylor, M. A.

Mr. *Wilberforce's Complaint of Misrepresentation of the Speeches of Members.*] Dec. 20. Mr. *Wilberforce* said, he wished to draw the attention of the House to a subject which had been much in his thoughts; it was a subject which nearly concerned the character and dignity of the House, and of every individual member. Whether the matter he was about to bring forward would lead to any motion, must depend in a great measure on the reception which the House would give to the remarks he wished to throw out. It was a standing order of the House that strangers should be excluded from the gallery, but this order had not been rigorously enforced, and some how or other, statements had been made in the public newspapers, said to be the report of what passed within that House, but in various instances which had come within his knowledge, they had contained misrepresentations, and had an evident tendency to prejudice the public mind against the deliberations of parliament. It became the House, therefore, seriously to consider whether it was not high time to meet the evil of which he complained, and to prevent the misrepresentation of gentlemen's speeches. For his own part, he entertained little doubt that the object of some of the parliamentary reports to which he referred, was, to aim a blow at the constitution, by means of an attack on that House and its members. If it was merely the case of an individual who had been thus injured, or of himself in particular, he would not press this matter upon their consideration; but he had thought for years past that there existed a studied design to misrepresent, and even to vilify the members and their proceedings. He had been told, when in the country, that he had both spoken and voted differently from what he had done, and he had heard persons in the country again and again express themselves with astonishment at the speeches and votes of individual members, to which they had been led by the misrepresentations which had gone forth in the public papers. Some of those vehicles had contented themselves with merely stating, that some honourable member had made a very able or eloquent speech, whilst the speech of another, in opposition to it, had been given at great length. The evident design of this was to bias the public mind against their constituents. An evil of such magnitude should be remedied some way or other. He could not but be anxious, not only that his own character, but that of every honourable gentleman should be represented fairly. He was far from objecting, that

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every thing transacted within that House should be fairly represented; but if it was found impossible to have this account fairly given, it would then become matter for serious consideration whether the House should not say, either that what passed there should be fairly stated or not at all. He was undetermined whether he should make any motion on the subject, but he should consider of it, and whether an increasing evil did not call for a special remedy. He was induced to state this matter in consequence of a remark lately made by an hon. member, that on Tuesday last there were not above 36 members met at four o'clock to carry through the new tax upon income, and from thence it was inferred that those who were for the bill were not very anxious in its support. He knew what effects such statements were likely to produce. He thought it therefore important to the character of parliament that it should be known, that the reverse of this statement was the fact, and that it was because gentlemen were zealous in favour of this measure of finance, that they were not present before four o'clock; gentlemen generally coming early when they meant to go away early; but, when they expected a late night, it was usual for them to dine first, and finish the business of the day before they came down to the House. It was for the House to consider what steps should be taken to remedy the evil of which he complained.

Debate in the Commons on the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act.] Dec. 21. On the order of the day for the second reading of the bill for continuing the Habeas Corpus Suspension act,

Mr. *Courtenay* said:—Every member must venerate a law which has contributed so much to the prosperity and happiness of Great Britain. This great bulwark of British liberty ought to be touched with a delicate hand, and nothing but the most obvious necessity should be pleaded in excuse for its suspension. I cannot, therefore, give my assent to a measure, the object of which is to deprive the people, for a still longer period, of one of the greatest blessings handed down to them by their ancestors, which, while it is allowed to operate, affords personal protection to every individual. "We must admire," says Ferguson, "as the key stone of civil liberty, the statute which forces the secrets of every prison to be revealed, the cause of every commitment to be declared, and the person of the accused to be produced, that he may claim his enlargement or his trial within a limited time. No wiser form was ever opposed to the abuses of power." It is upon an institution like this that those statesmen who wish to subvert liberty will naturally commence their attacks. It has often been assailed, and, as the same philosophical writer well observes, that, "it requires a fabric no less than the whole political constitution of Great Britain, a spirit no less than the turbulent and refractory zeal of this fortunate people to secure its effects." I am much afraid that this turbulent spirit no longer exists: if it had, the chancellor of the exchequer would not have been so successful in this measure. But let us look at the effects which the suspension of this act has produced. Not less than 70 or 80 persons were arrested last year. Has there not been time to bring them to a trial? To have arraigned and convicted these persons would, in my opinion, have been the best reason that could be urged for continuing the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act. Two terms have, however, elapsed without any attempt being made to try one of the persons who have been confined in consequence of the extraordinary powers given to the executive government. What reason can be assigned for continuing this power any longer in the hands of ministers. Have any insurrections taken place in any quarter of the country? On the contrary, I believe the right hon. gentleman cannot point out any period since the revolution, when more loyalty was displayed than at present. It will not be pretended that we have now any thing to fear from invasion. The fleets of the enemy have been destroyed, and we have not less than between 2 and 300,000 men in arms. Under all these circumstances, why continue to suspend an act upon which the liberty of the subject depends? There is another reason why I think the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act ought to cease. The persons imprisoned under the act, which it is now proposed you should continue, are most cruelly used. Having heard a great many reports respecting their situation, I resolved to go and see them, and inquire into the fact. An hon. friend of mine (sir F. Burdett) was rather cavalierly treated when he hinted at the situation in which these unfortunate men were placed,

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and I was resolved to ascertain the true state of the question. I procured an order from a magistrate, and went to see the prison, in company with my hon. friend and another gentleman, not a member of this House, but who is distinguished by his humanity. I must confess that I found the reports that had reached me, of the situation of the persons under confinement, had been exaggerated. Still, however, their situation was extremely wretched, and the manner in which they were treated unexampled in severity and rigour. I found them without fire and without candle—denied every kind of society—exposed to the cold and rain—only allowed to breathe the air out of their cells for about an hour—denied every comfort, every innocent amusement — excluded from all intercourse with each other, and every night locked up from all the rest of the world. Now I appeal to the gentlemen who hear me, whether they could have imagined that such a practice existed in this country, and whether they think that there was any necessity for treating state prisoners in this manner? I do not believe that ministers were privy to these proceedings. Among the prisoners, I saw a gentleman, with whom I was acquainted above thirty years ago; an officer distinguished in the service; and amiable in his character and manners —I mean colonel Despard. I am happy, however, to state, that I understand his situation has since been ameliorated. I am told he has lately been put into a room with a fire: and this change I am informed, he owes to the humane interference of Mr. John Reeves. Till the 25th of last month, he was confined in a solitary cell, where even his wife was not allowed to visit him. These cells are so cold, that at this season of the year, it is scarcely possible to exist in them. The cold may, in some degree, be tempered by closing the wooden shutters; but if the unhappy prisoner wishes to be cheered by the air and the light of heaven, he must admit the rain and chilling blasts of winter at the same time. This usage appeared to me so extraordinary, that I was at some trouble in inquiring of several gentlemen, eminent in the profession of the law, if ever they had known of such practices in this country. They uniformly answered, that they never had heard of such severity; that they considered the treatment I had described to be altogether unprecedented; and that they could not have imagined that any men were used in such a manner in this country. It is scarcely necessary to inform the House, that the prison of which I have been speaking is that which is commonly called the Bastile. [Hear, hear!] Do gentlemen doubt it? I can assure them it is known by that name. When I took a coach in Oxford-road, in order to visit the prison, I desired the coachmen to drive me to the Bastile. "Very well, sir," was the answer. Being curious to know whether he really understood the place I wanted to go to by this name, I said "You know it then?" "O yes, I know it—every body knows the Bastile in Cold-Bath Fields." Indeed, it is not surprising that such a name should be given to this prison, for when another Bastile formerly existed under a certain "regular government," which some gentlemen pretend very much to admire, state prisoners were treated better there than they have been treated in this. Perhaps it may be inquired under whose direction this prison is placed? I understand that some reverend gentlemen are among the magistrates who manage it. Perhaps they kindly subject these prisoners to so much pain in this world, that the less punishment may be inflicted on them in the next. [Hear, hear!] Well, if this motive does not please gentlemen, let them assign a better if they can, and I will give up this; but it is the best I can think of. But it is not to persons suspected of state crimes alone that the rigour I have described is extended. Many persons, charged with offences of various descriptions, undergo the same treatment. A man sentenced to imprisonment for selling a pamphlet called the "Duties of Citizenship," has been confined in one of these cells. His name is Smith. Now I should be glad to know whether this is the mode in which a man convicted of a libel ought to be punished? To be separated from his family, and shut up in an ordinary gaol, during the time of his sentence, one would think a sufficient execution of the sentence; but under this regimen the culprit is not only prevented from exercising his industry to support a wife and children, but his health is destroyed, and perhaps his mind deranged; for it would not be at all surprising if persons in such a situation were afflicted with insanity. I must not, however, omit to state, that this poor man was some time ago, in consequence of indisposition, re-

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moved from his cell, and placed in the sick ward, and, as the time of his imprisonment is nearly expired, and the sending him back to his cell might occasion a relapse, he is, I understand, to be allowed to remain in the sick-ward until he is discharged. The next person whose case I shall mention is that of a disorderly woman, one of those unfortunate creatures who walk the streets. She was not convicted of any felony, but was nevertheless confined in a cold damp cell. She was at the same time ill of that disease with which women of the town are pretty frequently afflicted. I leave it to the humanity of the House, whether it was proper to place this unfortunate woman in a situation, which, added to the virulence of her disorder, was likely to endanger her life. In another dismal cell I found a boy, confined there for disobedience to his master, a punishment which I believe, was never before heard of for an offence of the kind. Such were some of the spectacles I witnessed on this visit. I have, however, no doubt that any abuses which may exist will be corrected when they come to the knowledge of ministers. Indeed I am informed, that the state prisoners are now removed into a warm room, where they have free intercourse with each other, but what I have stated is sufficient to show that my hon. friend was not misinformed when he hinted that the state prisoners were improperly treated. I can not conclude without lamenting that an hon. gentleman, celebrated for his humanity, has not visited this prison. I am convinced that that hon. gentleman's principles of "Vital Christianity" would have induced him to exert himself to ameliorate the condition of these unhappy people. I am certain, however, that the hon. gentleman will no longer suffer it to be said by the unfortunate, "I was in prison, and you visited me not."

Mr. Secretary *Dundas* said, that the hon. gentleman had stated a number of facts, which, whether they were correct or not, had certainly no earthly connexion with the bill before the House. With all the humanity which the hon. gentleman had displayed, he believed every particle of it would have remained at rest if the present bill had not been moved: it was this bill that had caused the hon. gentleman to summon up the humanity of the House. If there existed any abuse in the management of the gaols of this kingdom, there was an easy remedy. If the hon. gentleman was led from general humanity to pity the condition of all prisoners, or from sympathy to deplore the condition of those who were accused of sedition, his course was to have gone to some magistrate with his complaint. If he thought that the bad conduct of gaols was general, there was nothing to prevent him from bringing forward any motion he might think necessary upon the subject. In order to show that this measure ought not to be now continued, the hon. gentleman should show that there did not exist any treasonable or seditious spirit in this country. Did he mean to say there was nothing of that kind discovered at Maidstone? Upon one fact the hon. gentleman would agree with him—that at Maidstone there was only one man convicted of high treason, and that there were four acquitted: but it would not be seriously contended, that because a man had been acquitted of high treason, it was a proof that he had never been guilty of high treason. It was not on the guilt of one or two individuals that this measure was founded; it was founded on a combination of persons acting in concert at home for the destruction of the state, and whose views extended also to a concert with the enemies of this country abroad, whenever any act for that purpose could be attempted with the hope of security to its projectors.

Mr. *Tierney* said, that he had given his vote for the bill of last session, and he should wish to show that he was not acting inconsistently in opposing the present. His reasons for this difference of opinion were shortly these. Last session a message was brought down from his majesty, stating, that there was imminent danger of an invasion, aided by disaffected and treasonable persons in this country, and a bill of indictment had been found by a grand jury at Maidstone against five persons for high treason. Combining these two circumstances together, it was impossible for him to deny that a case was made out, which warranted the temporary suspension of the Habeas Corpus act. The situation of the country was now, however, completely altered. No one who had read the king's speech at the opening of the present session, could suppose that ministers had now any apprehension of an invasion. Then, with regard to correspondence with the enemy, he had heard of none carried on from this country. There was, however, proof of correspondence

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with Ireland; but he learned from the same authority, that there was no connection between the societies existing in Ireland and those in Great Britain, and that any improper correspondence that might have passed between the two countries must have been through individuals only. He had a right to maintain that this fact was proved; for if the authority he alluded to was to be relied upon in one case, it was equally good in the other. The number of persons who had been arrested in consequence of the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act, had been between 70 and 80, who were now all discharged, expect a few, and these were not brought to trial, though detained in confinement since last April. This seemed to indicate that there was not much reason for continuing the measure; and it certainly was proper that some new motive should be shown before the House was called upon to agree to the bill. It had been said that the observations of his hon. friend, relative to the usage of the state prisoners, had no connexion with the bill; he, however, thought that they were very much in point. They tended to show the manner in which the powers given by that bill had been exercised. It appeared that those who were taken up under the act were not confined in the usual manner of persons merely suspected of an offence, but that they were treated as if they had been convicted of some great felony. He knew that very considerable differences of opinion prevailed among magistrates relative to the utility of solitary confinement; but he never yet heard its warmest supporters say, that an Englishman, who had been convicted of no crime, should be confined in one of those cells. He trusted that the House would feel the importance of preventing such an improper abuse of power. A man of rank, a colonel in the army, was among the persons stated to be treated with so much inhumanity. He saw no ground for continuing the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act. There might be a few lurking traitors in the country; but there was throughout England a general spirit of loyalty that would render it impossible for their arts to succeed.

The *Attorney General* said, that before he proceeded to state the reasons upon which was founded his decided approbation of the present measure, he thought it not unconnected with the present discussion, to remind the House of what an hon. gentleman, who appeared to consider it his duty to absent himself from parliament, had not long since said of the manner in which libels were punished by the laws of this country. That hon. gentleman, at a time when the state of Europe was very different from what it was at present, had thought fit in a public situation to say, that the punishment for this offence was particularly severe; and as this reflection seriously involved the court of King's-bench, he had been led to trace the history of its proceedings in this respect. The result of his inquiries authorized him in affirming, that never since the law took cognizance of libel were the sentences of the courts less rigorous than they had been for the last six years. Before this offence was so much aggravated by the indiscriminate abuse of every person and every institution in the country, that deserved to be reverenced and praised, the law of libel was administered with a severity unknown in our days. If gentlemen would compare the sentences of the court of King's-bench passed in the period he spoke of with those of any other period since the Revolution, it would be seen that the judges of our time, without neglecting their duty, had considerably softened the character of punishments in general, and that the punishment for libel in particular was not sufficiently severe. Formerly, the practice had been for the attorney-general to direct the punishment when persons were brought up for judgment; but he had acted upon a sentiment of a distinguished lawyer, the attorney-general of a former period, whom he revered and valued; he meant lord Thurlow. That great man was the first who disused the immemorial practice of directing punishment; and if the tempered and mild judgments of the Court did not wholly arise out of this circumstance, certainly much kindness and lenity succeeded it. Would gentlemen contend that the libels of the present day less outraged decency, and less offended against the laws? Let them look to the state trials of 1794. In those trials they would find that public meetings were in many places held for the purpose of propagating sedition; that not merely the ministers of the crown were libelled, but every institution, religious, political, and moral, with every individual, in whatever conspicuous situation in the administration of the laws or the government of his country he may have been placed. There were at the

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period he alluded to, corresponding societies and corresponding clubs, instituted, not for the purpose of making the members of that House responsible for their conduct, or to procure a constitutional reform of any abuses supposed to have entered into the practical part of government, but for the purpose of destroying that House, of erecting a convention on its ruins, of subverting the government, and in its stead of introducing the wild system of a neighbouring country. What, truly, was the case of Mr. Smith, of whom, in strains of lamentation, an hon. gentleman had said so much? Why this, he had been secretary of the corresponding society. He had published libel upon libel. Had the hon. gentleman ever read the book for which this man was prosecuted? He would find that every thing sacred, honourable, and good, was there blasphemously and wickedly libelled and traduced. It was a delicate subject at any time to discuss the verdicts of juries and the sentences of judges; but to comment on legal sentences in a state of perfect ignorance of the circumstances under which they were passed, showed not less of temerity than want of candour. With respect to the proceedings against Mr. Smith, and his treatment since his confinement, nothing severe had been done on the part of government or its officers. Had he made any representation to the secretary of state of unnecessary rigour, he was sure it would have been attended to.—It was reserved for our time, for the beneficent and moderate age of philosophy and the rights of man, to call those places Bastiles, which were instituted for the imprisonment of the offenders against the law. Would gentlemen look a little at the origin of this kind of scandal, and at the kind of persons by whom it was used: it claimed close kindred with the revolutionists of France, for our prisons were first called Bastiles by the orators of Copenhagen House and Pancras Fields, who used it not only in their public harangues, but in their confidential letters, so that we traced it most distinctly to the hot-bed of anarchy. When it was known to the court that Smith had made a representation of the severities of his confinement, lord Kenyon directed an inquiry into the truth of the case, and the result was, that the governor of the prison, and the physician, both testified that every degree of attention was paid to the health and comforts of the prisoners. Had the gentlemen who had visited the prisons inquired of the sheriffs, they would have found that it had been attempted to impose upon them, and the House would never have heard the accusation of that evening. After what had passed in Ireland, was it not now evident that the persons tried at Maidstone were implicated in a design to favour the invasion of Ireland? Gentlemen might say the evidence against these men was collected from spies; but it must be remembered, that this description of persons were always the more calumniated in proportion as they spoke truth. Ministers would not be justified in not taking measures of safety on the evidence of such men. United Irishmen could make United Britons; and if as a society they did not correspond with societies here, as individuals they propagated their mischief.

Mr. *Burdon* said, that he had visited the prison complained of, and had seen nothing to justify what had been objected on the subject. Every thing seemed to be conducted in the best manner of which such an establishment was capable. The state prisoners had a liberal allowance for their support, and every where the greatest neatness, regularity, and propriety prevailed.

Sir *Francis Burdett* was convinced, that great severity had, in some instances, been used. The hon. gentleman who spoke last might not, in walking round the gallery of the prison, have observed any symptoms of this, and in looking into the cells he might not perceive any offensive smell, and might see that the place was clean washed. What, however, must be the situation of a cell seven feet square, after a person had been in it some hours, or when persons were confined for many weeks without being permitted to go out but for a few minutes to wash themselves? In these cells there was no wood nor paper to keep the persons confined from the contact of the wall, and in wet weather, or after a frost, it was evident that a brick wall must be so damp as to be extremely unhealthy where no fire was allowed. He agreed, however, that these matters were not strictly in point. A future opportunity might occur for that discussion, and perhaps he might feel it necessary to move an inquiry on the subject. It was the duty of the House to take care that the extraordinary powers which it granted should not be abused. The learned gentleman had de-

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fended the proceedings of government, and the judgments of the courts of law in cases of libel. Certainly, however, that matter was not connected with the present subject. There was a case of great hardship, of which he had been informed. A number of persons were brought up to town from Manchester: they were loaded with irons; in this situation they travelled, and when they arrived, they were lodged in the House of Correction in Cold-bath Fields. From the effects of travelling in this state, their legs were very much swelled, and when lodged in the prison, the Bow-street officers ordered the irons to be knocked off, which was a very painful operation. They then were thrown into places quite unprepared for their reception, and next day taken before the privy council. Now, however, he understood, their situation was much improved. As to the bill before the House, no grounds had been stated on which the House could surrender so important a bulwark of the liberties of the subject.

The *Solicitor General* said, he should have thought that what had been disclosed at the late trials at Maidstone, as well as what had taken place in Ireland, were sufficient reasons for continuing the measure proposed. It was one that had been repeatedly adopted in times of danger. The bill for suspending the Habeas Corpus act originated in the reign of king William, in consequence of dangers to which he was exposed. In 1715, when this suspension was renewed, the most salutary consequences had followed. This precaution having been omitted in 1745, the country was left in a much more dangerous state than it was in 1715. Whoever had impartially considered what had lately passed in Ireland, must have seen that the society of United Irishmen had enabled the conspiracy to diffuse itself, till at length it burst forth in acts of open rebellion, which, from the very plan of these societies, drew a veil of secrecy over their proceedings, which made it difficult to bring home the guilt to individuals. Strong attempts had been made to establish similar societies in this country. Hence corresponding societies had been established with their executive committees, &c.; an *imperium in imperio* had been introduced, which was a germ of treason and rebellion, which, if not nipped in the bud, would soon have discovered itself in a more open form. Now such sort of treason was not easily brought home to the conviction of a juryman, because actual treason was concealed in the matter that was to bring it forth: and it was with great difficulty that minds, not habituated to consider the subject with the greatest attention, could be led to see the danger that surrounded them. Thus in Ireland under the pretence of Catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform, nothing less than the separation of Ireland from England, and the erection of the former into an independent republic, was the object aimed at. So here, the pretence of a reform, &c. had been assumed. But would gentlemen say that this was a cloak that concealed nothing? The executive government assuredly would not not have done its duty, had they not made use of all lawful means to thwart the designs of such confederacies, and made application to parliament for that power which it was the object of the present bill to impart.

Mr. *Mainwaring* said, that the House of Correction in Cold-bath Fields had not been established for any such purpose as that for which, in the present situation of affairs, it had been found necessary to employ it. With regard to its management, he could say, that there were none of the abuses stated. The keeper of that gaol was a person of great humanity, and every care was exerted for preserving the health and comfort of persons confined. He was sure that there was not a more comfortable place of the kind in the whole country, or one in which, in proportion to the numbers confined, there was less sickness.

Mr. *Wilberforce* said, he was astonished at what the hon. baronet had said, respecting the situation of the prison in Cold-bath Fields; he had been there as well as the hon. baronet, not for the purpose of visiting any particular persons, or on the spur of the occasion, but to examine the general state of the place, and to view the situation of the prisoners. He had likewise been in the habit of corresponding on the subject, before there was any idea of its being agitated in that House, and the accounts he had received were very different from what some gentlemen had stated. Nothing can be more satisfactory than the account which a friend had given him of the state of the prison, as to the health and treatment of the prisoners. The gentleman who wrote the letter, a respectable clergyman, stated that he had seen the food intended for the prisoners, which consisted of as good legs

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of mutton and pieces of beef as he had ever seen at his own table: that the utmost cleanliness prevailed throughout the place; that of the 240 which the prison contained at any one time, the sick were only three, and the deaths for the whole year only two. What then were the facts of the case? On the one side there was the evidence of the minutes of the proceedings of the magistrates superintending the prison, and on the other, the accounts which gentlemen opposite had received from the parties themselves. All these facts clearly proved that the gentlemen opposite had been imposed on, and that, from too credulously listening to the information they received, they had brought a serious charge against a worthy set of magistrates. He trusted he was not the last to feel what was due to suffering, but at the same time there were feelings of another kind which ought not to be overlooked. He never could forget the saying of that great and good man lord Hale. When asked how he felt when he pronounced sentence of death on a criminal, he replied, "that he felt for the situation of the prisoner, but he felt likewise for the country." He recommended the example of lord Hale to the gentlemen opposite. They seemed to be tremblingly alive to the situation of those who were taken up on suspicion of the greatest crimes; but they did not seem to be alive to the danger of the country. With regard to the measure before the House, those who thought that there had been danger; who think that the danger is not entirely over, would not deprive the executive of those means by which they had been enabled to provide for the safety of the country.

Mr. *M. A. Taylor*, though he agreed that ministers had exercised the discretion entrusted to them in as tender a manner as possible, said that a case had not been made out so strong as to induce him to support the motion. He thought it would be prudent to send to a select committee the grounds upon which they conceived that the suspension ought to be continued. In the prosecution and punishment of libels there had been no harshness. As to citizen Smith and others, he had seen most of their publications, and more diabolical ones, in his opinion, never existed. But still there was in the hands of the attorney general the power to prosecute, and in the hands of the court the power to punish; he therefore conceived that there were not grounds for the suspension of the act. While there was a dread of invasion it was right to adopt such a measure; that dread, however no longer existed.

Mr. *Ellison* supported the bill, because he thought the circumstances of the country rendered it necessary to vest those powers in the executive; and he was the more inclined to support it, because the powers with which ministers had been trusted, had been well exercised.

Mr. Alderman *Combe* could not consent to the continuance of this restraint, as, from the state of the country, he saw no necessity for parting with the great bulwark of our liberty.

Mr. *Western* said, that as no grounds had been stated to the House to show the necessity of this measure, he could not support it. There never was a period in which the domestic safety of the empire was in less danger than it was at present.

Mr. *Pitt*, while he expressed the warmest satisfaction at hearing it stated from all quarters that the situation of the country had been so greatly improved, could not but remind the House, that this change had been obtained by the adoption of those measures, which some gentlemen who now exulted in our safety, had represented as calculated to produce disaster abroad, and to destroy the constitution at home. If the measures which had been adopted by parliament had answered the ends for which they were designed; if they had rescued the country from those dangers which were now no longer represented as imaginary, surely it was a most singular argument to say, that at the moment in which they were mutually congratulating each other upon the advantageous change which had taken place in our affairs, they ought to throw away those very means by which that advantageous change had been obtained. Did gentlemen think, that because we had, by the wise and vigorous measures we had adopted, fortunately escaped the perils with which we were menaced, we might now with safety abandon our efforts, and relax our precaution? Did they suppose that, if exulting in the idea of security, they were to sink into inattention and supineness, these dangers might not recur? Though Jacobinism might be curbed and repressed, yet while the principle remained unextinguished, its efforts would

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not cease. Jacobinism, to all that was detestable and abhorrent, added one quality which increased its malignity, and that was an incorrigible obstinacy, a wicked determination to be influenced by no arguments, to be convinced by no facts. He trusted that the success that had hitherto attended these measures would be an argument for their continuance. An hon. gentleman had suggested the propriety of appointing a secret committee, to inquire into the necessity of continuing the suspension. But what farther proof could be necessary after what had passed in Ireland? A time, he hoped, would come, during the present session, when, through the medium of a secret committee, the public might be put in possession of many circumstances, of which they now could have conception—circumstances, which would more fully display that system of treason which had been carried on, and those links by which Irish traitors were connected with traitorous societies in this country. But at present he should be ashamed to have recourse to a secret committee, to justify them in adopting a measure, of the expediency of which they were so perfectly convinced.

The House divided:

Tellers.

Yeas	Mr. Attorney General Mr. Burdon	96
Noes	Mr. Tierney Mr. Alderman Combe	6

The bill was then read a second time.

List of the Minority.

Burdett, sir Francis	Western, C. C.
Baring, sir Francis.	Tellers
Bouverie, hon. E.	Tierney, G.
Denison, W. J.	Combe, alderman
Taylor, M. A.	

Dec. 26. The order of the day was read for going into a committee on the bill. On the question being put, that the Speaker do now leave the chair,

Mr. *Courtenay* said, he was about to adduce additional reasons against suspending the Habeas Corpus act any longer. But before he did so, he would read the declaration made by his majesty in April: "Whereas it appears that the preparation for the embarkation of troops and warlike stores are now carried on with considerable and increasing activity in the ports of France, Flanders, and Holland, with the avowed design of attempting the invasion of his majesty's dominions; and that in this the enemy is encouraged by the correspondence and communications of traitorous and disaffected persons and societies of these kingdoms." Here was a plain and candid reason assigned for the suspension of the act; but was the case the same now as it was then? Were our enemies making preparation for the invasion of these kingdoms? Had they not been baffled and discomfited in different parts of the world? He must now advert to what had been said by the attorney-general during the last debate upon this measure. That gentleman had stated some points, as if he (Mr. C.) had misrepresented facts relative to the prisoners in Clerkenwell. Now, as a corroboration of what he had stated upon this matter, he begged to read a letter from the wife of colonel Despard: "Some mention having been made in the newspaper reports of the House of Commons relative to the treatment of colonel Despard in the new prison, I think it necessary to state that the colonel was confined near seven months in a damp cell, not seven feet square, without either fire or candle, chair, table, knife, fork, a glazed window, or even a book to read. I made several applications in person to Mr. Wickham, under secretary of state, and by letter to the duke of Portland—all to no purpose. About the 20th of last month he was removed into a room with a fire, but not until his feet were ulcerated by frost. For the truth of this statement, I appeal to Mr. Lawless, or John Reeves, esq. who visited the colonel in prison, and at whose intercession he was removed. I state these facts without the colonel's knowledge, as even his jailer will bear witness that he never made any complaint of his treatment, however severe it was. The colonel served his majesty thirty years, and all his family are now in the army. Catharine Despard. Berkeley-square, Dec. 23, 1798." It was very true that when he saw the colonel he made no complaint to him. He asked the colonel, if he had been confined in the same manner as the other state prisoners committed since the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act? He answered, yes; and that he had been confined to his cell, till removed by the humane interference of Mr. Reeves. He knew colonel Despard thirty years ago; he was then in the service. An hon. gentleman had asked, if he had any sympathy

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with prisoners of this description? He understood, and held in contempt, the mean and malignant insinuation. He avowed that he sympathised with the victims of oppression. If the persons confined in this prison, under the authority of this act, were guilty, let them be tried and condemned; but if they were not guilty, let them be acquitted. To general declamation upon probable guilt, or suspicion of guilt, he paid no regard; nor did christian rancour, or religious facetiousness, affect him. A worthy magistrate had stated, that the prison which he alluded to was not originally designed for persons of this description, and that their being sent there was matter of necessity; but if it was necessary to send them to this place, there was no necessity of treating them with inhumanity when they were in it. In his opinion, the complaints of abuse of the power given to government by this act, might logically be urged against its renewal. He had stated these facts, because he believed them to be true; but if they should be proved to be false, he should be very happy to retract them.

The *Attorney General* said, that the court of King's-bench did not order Smith to be sent to that prison until after they had been well assured that it was a fit and proper place to receive him. They did it in the execution of an important duty, and the hon. gentleman who talked so much of cruelty, would give him leave to say, that he knew of no cruelty so harsh as that of a member of parliament endeavouring to call forth the public indignation on persons who stood in a situation of great difficulty as well as of importance, without examining the case on which they spoke. As to colonel Despard, he was a man who had been long in the service of his country most certainly, and who appeared to conduct himself well in his confinement. The report of the case of this gentleman, as stated this night, was taken from a letter published in the newspapers. In this case there was two considerations involved: 1. What had been the conduct of the duke of Portland and of Mr. Wickham? 2. What had been the regulation of the gaol itself? It had been always held that persons committed for high treason, or on suspicion of high treason, should be kept "safe and close:" and therefore, however apparently harsh it might be, to put a person only accused in a situation in which he could not converse with others, yet it was a condition inseparable from the nature of the thing. There had been something said about the wives and friends of some prisoners being refused access to them. By the way, there were some wives who had met with much indulgence, in not being taken up and confined as well as their husbands. Some complaints having been made to the duke of Portland relative to the situation of colonel Despard, Mr. Wickham, in May 1798, wrote a letter to the keeper of the prison, stating that he was directed by the duke to desire that the wife of colonel Despard should have access to him, and converse with him in the presence of any proper person to be entrusted for that purpose. He had the deposition of a person on oath, stating that colonel Despard, on hearing what had been said in the House of Commons of the hardships of his situation, was surprised at it, and added, that if necessary, he would contradict it himself. The account he had received of the matter was this: Mrs. Despard, in June, wrote a letter to the duke of Portland, in consequence of which the duke sent for the gaoler of the prison, and gave him directions, importing that there should be shown to the prisoner every indulgence which the nature of the warrant under which he was committed would admit. After this Mrs. Despard wrote another letter to the duke, to which no answer was returned, because proper directions had been already given. Mrs. Despard wrote another letter to Mr. Wickham. He told her she had better write again to the duke. She did so. The duke heard her complaint himself, and ordered the colonel to have every thing consistent with the nature of the warrant, and safe custody: he ordered him to be allowed the use of books, and directed the gaoler to attend to the circumstance of his being a man of rank, and to allow him such accommodation as common feeling dictated on that account. After this, Mr. Wickham, by the order of the duke of Portland, desired Mr. Ford to go to the gaol, and order every indulgence, that was consistent with safety, to be given to all the prisoners. Some time after this the duke ordered colonel Despard to be removed to the place where he now was. Here he read the description of the cells in which the prisoners were confined, by which it was clear there was no pretence for saying they were damp or unwholesome.

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He read also some parts of a conversation, by which he collected that the letter was not of the writing of Mrs. Despard. Perhaps she did not see the whole drift of it. It was a well written letter, and for a certain purpose well adapted; and the fair sex would pardon him, if he said it was a little beyond their style in general. There were artful men in that prison, and some of them had shown they ill deserved the lenity that was shown to them; some of them had a great number of O'Connor's pamphlets ready for circulation. He hoped in future, before any information was given to the House with respect to the treatment of prisoners, every member would feel it his duty not to rely on the reports of newspapers, but to sift the matter to the bottom.

Mr. *Wilberforce* acknowledged, that we ought not to take away that guard to which we owed the security of our rights and liberties, upon slight and capricious grounds. When, however, it was obvious that we had enemies both without and within: when we saw members of that House, who appeared at least friendly to persons of such a stamp, then it became that House not to relax in any of our exertions to counteract the designs and machinations of such enemies: we should not hesitate to sacrifice a part of that, the whole of which we might secure and hereafter enjoy by means of that seasonable sacrifice.

Sir *F. Burdett* contended, that every assertion he had made was grounded upon facts. He would now adduce new facts in proof of his former assertions. The hon. baronet then read several papers sent him by the prisoners from Manchester, the general purport of which was, to describe the hardships which they had suffered in the prison at Cold-bath fields; among which they enumerated their being confined in solitary cells, measuring only eight feet by six, where they could not obtain any thing like a bed without paying a shilling for it; where they were left without fire or candle, exposed to cold weather, in a narrow space where the wet continued to flow down the walls, a situation in which they had been compelled to linger for seven months; that far different treatment had been promised them by the privy council; and though they had repeatedly written to Mr. Ford the magistrate, they could obtain no redress. He could not see that the charge of any particular species of guilt could afford any justification for such cruel treatment. If, after due investigation, he should find that the ill-treatment of the prisoners was not grounded on fact, he not only would be ready to make the *amende honorable*, but should enjoy the happiness of having his feelings relieved from the idea that such foul atrocities had been practised in the country that gave him birth. It was his wish that evidence should be called to the bar, in order to have the whole matter cleared up to the general satisfaction of the country.

Mr. *Boudon* said, that as soon as he had seen Mrs. Despard's letter, he felt it his duty to inquire minutely into the causes of her complaints. With that view he had a long conversation with colonel Despard, in the presence of the governor of the prison. The colonel informed him, that he was as comfortable, in every circumstance, as the nature of a prison would admit. It was true, that in September he had a chilblain on his heel; but so little did he think of it, that he would not employ the surgeon of the prison to relieve it. As soon as his complaints were known, he was removed to a room where he had fire, candles, and every accommodation he could fairly expect, he had frequent interviews with his wife, with whom he was permitted to converse for almost any length of time. He had not any knowledge of the letter written by her complaining of his ill-treatment; if he had, he would have disapproved of it. As to the dampness of the cells, he had examined them himself: they were raised considerably above the ground, and not exposed to wet of any kind. The walls were moreover thick, and well white-washed. The beds neither touched the walls, nor were they exposed to any inclemency of the weather. What, then, could be the effect of agitating a question like the present, but to traduce the fair character of respectable men, and particularly of the magistrates, whose conduct should not be lightly arraigned?

Mr. *Canning* rose to ask, where was the ground for the inquiry which the hon. baronet was so anxious should be instituted? The House was not in the habit of granting inquiries without some adequate motive to justify them. It should clearly appear that all was not right before an inquiry was acceded to. But here every statement brought forward had been contradicted. The House, therefore, should institute no inquiry on

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the subject, but leave the scouted task to the gentlemen who stirred the question. The hon. baronet had said, that whatever was brought forward by the ministerial side of the House never failed to make an impression, because it had the countenance of ministers; while, whatever the opposite side attempted to enforce made no impression. But upon whom did the hon. baronet expect to make an impression? Surely not upon the House; no, not even upon the mind of the greatest idiot. After what had been observed on the case of colonel Despard, it would be idle to offer a word more on the subject. What now was the case? An illiterate woman, who cannot even spell, writes a letter, an able letter let it be supposed, pathetically describing the hardships and cruelties sustained by her husband: it also comes out, that this letter was written, not by Mrs. Despard, but by a friend. He would not say that it was written by the hon. gentleman (Mr. Courtenay), for he had seen some of his writings, and would assert, that the letter in question was as far superior to his literary productions, as it was above the former epistolary specimens of Mrs. Despard. The whole of that letter had been completely contradicted; and those who so confidently brought it forward, were so completely brought to shame and ridicule, that he was sure they would not venture to restate it again. He would advise the hon. gentleman for the future to keep his humanity for Smith and Binns, his religion for Newgate, and his jokes for the hackney coachmen.

The House then resolved itself into the committee, in which it was agreed that the bill should remain in force till the 21st of May, 1799. The report was then ordered to be received to-morrow. On which day the bill was read a third time, and passed.

Debate in the Commons on the Income Duty Bill.] The Income Duty Bill was committed on the 17th and 19th of December. In the committee a variety of amendments and modifications, were after long and desultory conversations, agreed to.

Dec. 22. The House having again resolved itself into a committee on the bill,

Mr. *H. Thornton* said, it was the object of the bill, that, if possible, a man who had a fluctuating income should pay to the exigencies of the state in the same proportion as the person who enjoyed a stated income. To prevent evasion, he proposed, that when a person had once made his election, whether he would pay according to the full amount of profit within the preceding year, or for an average of three years, he should not be at liberty afterwards to vary the election he had made.

Sir *F. Baring* said, that by not allowing the option annually, many cases of extreme hardship must necessarily arise.

Mr. Alderman *Curtis* was of opinion, that the alternative was not intended as a boon to commercial men, but as an equitable mode of ascertaining their income, and that no mode could so securely guard against evasion as that of restoring men to their first election. In the other case, persons might easily shape and shuffle their books so as to make false entries and fallacious balances, and thereby defraud the revenue. Already evasion had prevailed, within his own knowledge.

Mr. *Tierney* reprobated the frequent use of the term "evasion," and thought a variety of cases of hardship might be put, if the average was to be made on three years. Many men felt themselves so hard pressed by the weight of taxes, that they felt themselves honestly and conscientiously justifiable in trying whether, without violating the letter of the law, they might not avoid a part of the burthen.

Mr. *Pitt* said, if the hon. gentleman was right in supposing that conscientious men would think themselves justifiable in taking every advantage to evade the tax, it was the more incumbent on him to make the letter of the law so strict that its spirit should not be evaded.

Mr. *Wilberforce* dwelt upon evasion, and the necessity of preventing men who would selfishly enjoy all the comforts of life, without contributing in due proportion to their preservation, from the farther practice of such an illiberal system.

Mr. *Tierney* said, it was a common saying, that tricks which were fair in love, were also fair in taxation; that was, that every advantage which could, might be taken. He might, therefore, suppose, that many conscientious men would think themselves justified in taking every advantage of this law; not to evade the letter of it, but its heavy effects. He would illustrate this more precisely. A very distinguished person had lately thought it neither a sin nor a shame to evade his pro-

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portion at the period of the triple assessment. He possessed a handsome pension, but having in view the certainty of a place of much greater emolument, he resigned the pension, and took advantage of the interval to include neither the one nor the other in his return. The person alluded to, now held a considerable office, and the right hon. gentleman need not look far for him, as he would be found among his most intimate acquaintance.

Mr. *Pitt* said, that if the case was put as a real one it deserved the most serious attention, and called upon the hon. gentleman to name the person.

Mr. *Tierney* declined to do so.

Lord *Hawkesbury* insisted that the person alluded to ought to be named. If the hon. gentleman undertook to state a case of that nature, he should not refuse to specify particulars. He ought to disclose the whole case, or not mention it at all.

Mr. *Tierney* said, he would not have stated what he did without reason. He had it from respectable authority, but he did not consider himself justified in mentioning the name until he should make farther inquiry.

Mr. *Pitt* said, that the hon. gentleman might do an injury by declining to name the person, whereas, if he did name the person, none could arise in the case of his being mistaken. If, however, he would not specify particulars he must consider the statement totally unfounded. The hon. gentleman had said, that the person alluded to was an officer of considerable consequence. For his part, he did know an instance, and only one, of a person who had lately relinquished a pension, and received an office of considerable consequence; but if the allusion was meant to apply to him, the hon. gentleman had been most grossly deceived; for, from his personal knowledge, he could aver that that personage had paid his full proportion, making no other deduction than what he was justly and fairly entitled to, amounting to one tenth; but that personage did not rest there, for he had doubled that sum in voluntary contribution; so that instead of a tenth, he had actually paid a fifth of his income.

Mr. *Tierney* was ready to agree to the proposition of the right hon. gentleman that if the House should hear no more on the subject, his statement should be supposed unfounded.

Mr. *Bankes* said, that if the rumour should prove to be unfounded, the hon. gentleman ought to retract the charge as publicly as he had made it.

Mr. *Tierney* said, he had not the least objection to inquire into the circumstance, and having so inquired, to satisfy the right hon. gentleman. But with respect to being put thus to the torture, it was what he could not submit to.

Mr. *Pitt* said, that the instance to which the whisper seemed to point, was that of the noble lord (Auckland) who had been appointed one of the Postmasters general; but so far from the fact being true, he could assert that that person had given in his income as high as it could be given in; that he had only claimed the exceptions to which he was fairly entitled by law, and that having so done, he had doubled the tenth, and thus paid a fifth.

Here the conversation ended. The other clauses of the bill were then gone through, and the bill was reported.

Dec. 27. On the order of the day being read for taking the report of the committee into consideration,

Sir *W. Pulteney* said, that there were in the measure now before them many points to which he must call their attention. It appeared to him that the liberty of any country consisted in three points—security of life—security of personal freedom—security of property. Upon the first, namely the security of life, when he considered the powers of grand juries, who, in all cases, had this point before them, except those of a military nature, and when he considered the many excellent regulations that subsisted with regard to treason, he was ready to say there was no complaint to be urged. With regard to the second point, namely, personal liberty, certain it was, that while the Habeas Corpus act remained suspended, that was in some measure abridged, but for a temporary and particular purpose that might be submitted to. But with regard to the third branch of national liberty, namely, security to property, he questioned whether any part of it would continue if this bill passed into a law. There must be a power of levying taxes vested some where; in most of the monarchies of Europe they vested in the monarch, under certain modifications. But in this country, thanks to the exertions of our ancestors, it was settled, that no money could be levied on the subject but through the medium of parliament. It was brought into

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question in the time of Charles 1st, and it was upon this point that the great Hampden distinguished himself, and that the civil war afterwards broke out. It was now, beyond all dispute, settled, that the people of this country cannot be taxed in any way but through the consent of their representatives in parliament. Indeed ever since the Revolution taxes had been raised in no other manner; and it had been the policy of parliament to impose taxes in such a way as to afford to each class of the community an option whether they would pay them or not; because they were always imposed on consumption. To this general policy there were but two exceptions, namely, the land tax and the tax upon windows. But it might be said, that a tax upon the absolute necessaries of life left no option, because they must be had: but, even in that case, the quantity was at the discretion of the consumer. And, indeed, the direct and immediate articles of life still remained untaxed; bread, for instance, had no tax; milk was not taxed: vegetables were not taxed. But, to return—when parliament had sanctioned the scheme of a minister, and allowed him to have recourse to means of taxation which gave no option, it sanctioned a new system of taxation, which would give away much of the controlling power of taxes. It might be said, that it was extremely difficult to find out articles of consumption upon which taxes could be imposed. He was ready to acknowledge the truth of that assertion: but he was very far from wishing to abandon the system on that account; and indeed that was, in some respects, a desirable thing: it was a great check upon the executive government; it made them provident of the public money, and made parliament active in examining what were the best modes of raising large sums of money. But, if the principle of this measure, was once established, although the minister this year only called for one-tenth of the income of the people, next year he might call for two-tenths, then for three-tenths, and so on until the whole was taken away, for the principle being once adopted, would not admit of any limitation; and therefore, upon that ground, he thought this a very improper mode of raising money for the service of the state. The principle of the assessed taxes had no resemblance to this; for although it might be said, that the party had no option in the first year, as to what he should pay under the assessment, yet, in the next year, he had clearly an option. But it was said, that the assessed taxes did not produce as much as was expected, and there were many evasions. That all they produced was not enough, he admitted, but as to evasions, he was of opinion, they might have been prevented by proper regulations. Besides these there were many very great objections to this measure, even as now altered. Suppose a man gives in a fair statement of his income, would that prevent a disclosure of his affairs? By no means, for it depended not upon the truth or falsehood of the account, but the choice of the commission whether the disclosure should be made or not. There were two temptations to shun a disclosure of a man's circumstances: first, because they were bad; secondly, there were many objections to a man's disclosing his good circumstances. [a laugh]. Gentlemen would perhaps alter their tone, if they heard him out. Would it not be a desirable thing to conceal good circumstances in any case? Had it never occurred to the House, that it had a bad effect on a man's children, to know very early in life, that they would become possessed of large fortunes on the death of their parents? And was this observation never applicable to any other branches of a man's family? If it was said, these things were inseparable from the bill, there might then arise two questions; first, whether the bill should not be abandoned altogether? and if that was determined in the negative, then whether a better mode than this might not be adopted? He must now notice the situation into which the commissioners would be thrown by this bill. It would be difficult for them to refuse to order a schedule to be made upon the suggestion of the inspectors; and was it not grievous to a gentleman to reflect, that, notwithstanding he had charged himself to the utmost farthing, with the hope that his affairs might not be exposed, they would be exposed after all? This would tend to crush the independent spirit of the people, and was a measure partaking of the spirit of absolute government. There was a great objection also to this bill, upon the ground that government must necessarily become acquainted with the circumstances of every individual in the kingdom, and consequently know when and where to find all the property in England. This was a thing that was quite improper for any go-

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vernment to know, for it would be an encouragement to the minister to go on with a scale of ruinous expense, and there was nothing to oppose the desire of the minister whenever he wanted to lay hold of any of this property. The oath set for and prescribed in the bill had a tendency to this dangerous disclosure. There was a clause directing that books should be prepared, and these books might in time come on the table of the minister; and this would of itself make the state of property extremely insecure. This mode was, indeed, not intirely new; but it had never been adopted since the Revolution. He knew that the system of this bill was adopted under the Protectorate; there was then an assessment of income, and every man in the kingdom was made to contribute. It was levied very arbitrarily and unjustly; and nothing ever made the people feel more dejection than that system of taxation; it probably had a great share in bringing about the restoration of Charles 2nd. After that restoration the system was found impracticable, and, as far as regarded the landed interest, it ended in a land tax. There was another objection which he had to urge. This tax exempted all persons whose income was under 60*l.* a year, and placed in the highest scale of impost a person of 200*l.* a year. This would rest very hard indeed on the middling class of society, and but slightly on the upper class; when it came to be continued, as most probably it would if agreed to now, it would soon ruin the middling class of society; and when that should be the case did any man believe that the liberty of the country would long continue? This bill would destroy that middling class, and would do it soon; and then we should have only two classes in the community, and a miserable community it would be, of noblemen and peasants. Many country gentlemen thought well of this bill, under an idea that it would be an equal impost upon those who were able to bear it; but in that they were miserably deceived, for it would take away from the farmer the means of making improvements in agriculture, which would affect the labourer or peasant directly. It would diminish the means of the manufacturer to carry on his manufacture, and therefore directly affect all those who subsisted by working at manufactures, and so, without any circuitous progress, it would affect at once all the lower classes of the community, by diminishing the means of employing them. The next objection he had to this bill was, that it was going against all principle of taxation. This was an opinion he had given to the public twenty years ago. He had stated that opinion upon consideration of the subject of the taxation of the colonies in America. It had been the uniform practice of the parliament of England since the revolution to hold out but one measure of taxation to all descriptions of persons. Suppose we had a different mode of taxation for Yorkshire from any other county, would that be deemed fair and wise? Certainly not. The principle was, that all classes were to be affected alike; and yet that was not the case under this bill, for there was a class of men who were to be found in every part of this country, who were under a different mode from all the rest of the community. He meant commercial men. They were to have a set of surveyors of their own. This might be very convenient to these persons, and, as far as it was convenient to them, he did not object to it; but he saw no reason upon earth why the same sort of regulation should not be extended to all other descriptions of persons. It might be said, that this was a tax upon all places and pensions, and that if it bore very hard, there was a phalanx of that description to take care it should not go too far. To this he would observe, that, with regard to places and pensions, the ministers would always be able to compensate the sufferers in that particular. He laid no great stress, however, on that point; but he did lay great stress on the unconstitutional principle, of making a distinction in the mode in which different classes were to be subjected to an investigation of their means of bearing a duty. The last objection he had to urge was, that the bill did not hold out, that this was not to be a mode of taxation to be adopted in future. It must continue at least for three years, and if this war did not terminate this year, it must continue for four years. It was only expressed, that the operation of the bill should not cease until such a time; but nothing was held forth to the country at what time it should cease. Upon the whole of this case, he thought this bill was dangerous in its very nature; that it encroached in an alarming degree, upon the principles of the constitution; and that if the plan which it involved should save some money to the state, it would be dearly bought.

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Mr. *Ryder* said, he should deem it presumptuous to oppose the opinion of the hon. baronet upon the principle of such a measure as this, unless he was supported by some authority; an authority, however, he had, namely, that of the hon. baronet himself. The hon. baronet had, last year, when the assessed taxes were under discussion, strenuously supported the principle of raising the whole supplies within the year. The hon. baronet objected, that the tax now before the House was not optional; but there were many taxes in this country in which there was no option. He had heard, for instance, of a poll-tax; of taxes taking the tenth and the fifteenth of every man's income. What did the hon. baronet think of the tithes, which amounted to nearly five millions a year? What would he say to the whole system of our poor laws? The same observation would apply to all county rates. All of which proved, that uniformly, since the Revolution, a large portion of the taxes paid by the subjects of this country, had not been optional; and it had been a system adopted by another state, which, next to this, was the most considerable in commercial arrangements and good policy, he meant Holland, and from which we had borrowed the tax on collateral succession. The whole of the Assessed-tax bill was not optional. Persons, indeed, might live in houses of less rent than they formerly did, but it was impossible for them to live in houses that paid no tax. If it was admitted, that to raise the tax upon the luxuries was impossible, it followed, of course, that it could only be levied upon the necessaries of life. Was that the mode by which the hon. baronet meant to provide for the middle or the poorest classes? A tax on the necessaries of life must raise the wages of labour. If this was the mode which the hon. baronet meant to suggest, it was evident that any tax, if levied upon articles of consumption, must be heavier than the present one.

Mr. *Jones* said, we were placed between two evils: we had to dread, on the one hand, the horrible evils of the French revolution; and, on the other, the evils that must necessarily arise from any measure entrenching on the constitution. When he voted for the Triple-assessment bill of last session, he declared it to be a strong measure; but we were then threatened with invasion; that storm was blown over. The cases were therefore different. For his part, he was willing to support the mode proposed of raising the supplies within the year, but he was also determined to defend the constitution, which the present bill would tend to move from its centre. For this reason, therefore, he must oppose its farther progress; for it would erect an inquisitorial power, not only unknown to the constitution, but totally subversive of it.

Mr. *Dent* supported the bill, being convinced that, instead of injuring the constitution, it would, on the contrary, have the effect of preserving it.

Mr. *J. H. Browne* examined the bill, and could by no means admit that the measure was liable to the objections that had been urged against it. How did it tend to invade property? Merely to require a statement of property was surely not an attempt to invade it. The objection, therefore, militated only against the abuse of such a disclosure, against which abuse the bill afforded every requisite guard. It was also argued, that any disclosure, under any circumstances, must prove extremely inconvenient to individuals. But it ought to be recollected, that, by nothing but a sacrifice of private convenience could the calls for the public service be answered, and that the general good must ever result from something that might be individually felt as a hardship. We were called upon, by public duty, to make some great effort, in order to rescue Europe from the oppression under which a great part of it groaned. The present measure appeared to him to be the only one that could enable us to accomplish that great end, and as such it should have his support.

Mr. *W. Smith* said, there was one great error into which the supporters of the bill had fallen. They charged the opposers of it with inconsistency, because they had acknowledged the necessity of raising a great portion of the supplies within the year. But on what principle did they rest this necessity? It must be either a physical or political necessity; if it were a physical necessity, then he would unreluctantly yield to that necessity; but if it only proceeded on the ground of a political necessity, then the nature of that necessity should be duly inquired into. In his opinion, political necessity should be guided by a nice balance of the conveniencies and inconveniencies to which the measure might give rise. If the conveniencies were proved to preponderate over

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the inconveniencies, then the necessity might be fairly pleaded. But if, on the contrary, however it might be attended with many inconveniencies, it plainly appeared, that in its principle it was unjust, that in its execution it was oppressive. He was at a loss to see how he should be justified in admitting the plea of such a political necessity. To these, his objections, the approvers of the bill would oppose a directly contrary assertion. They would assert, that the principle and provisions of the bill were equitable and just. He, however, must persist in styling them unjust and unequitable; and in this assertion he persisted, not from the suggestion of any private interest, but merely upon public grounds. He had heard it asserted, that a majority of the citizens of London had declared in favour of the tax. That merchants of the first order, and under particular circumstances, might be able and willing to pay the tax, he was not inclined to deny. There was, however, another class of commercial men, of whom the same could not be said; the class he alluded to was of a much lower order, and possessed of far inferior resources. On them the proposed tax must bear with oppressive weight. The measure went also to confound an income arising from laborious industry, an income purely contingent, and which, before the next year, might sink into nothing, with one of a permanent nature, and exposed to no vicissitudes. To tax in equal rate two incomes of such very opposite conditions, would surely be a crying injustice. Nor did he think, that to him, or to those who held the same opinions with him on a former occasion, respecting the propriety of taxing salaries arising from places and public offices, there could now be imputed any degree of inconsistency. Those salaries were not solely the reward of laborious industry; they were the source also of enjoyment, as well as of emolument. Yet it would be said that they formed part of the income of such persons, and therefore would be taxed. But other considerations should be here attended to, and on this point he would again avail himself of the authority of Adam Smith. According to that celebrated author, those who held public offices, had general means of rewarding their labours, and the remuneration seldom fell short of the services they performed; therefore, such emoluments were not an improper object to be taxed as income. These salaries were often, besides, but a small part of such income. The power, the patronage, the credit, and the consideration that attended them, were valued much higher than the mere salary annexed to them; and they were consequently sought after with more avidity than situations of a different description that were estimated at a much higher sum. They were, therefore, by no means on a level with other sorts of income.—The tax had been justified by a comparison with other taxes. It had been compared with the poll-tax: this comparison was surely not very happy; for if it bore any relation to that tax, it ought most certainly to convince us, that the idea of it should never be entertained; for had not that tax been reprobated by our most approved writers? It had also been compared with the poor-rates; but this also was far from being a popular tax. The present tax was also compared to tithes; but there there was often room for commutation. When a person buys a farm, he knows the amount of the poor-rates and of the tithes which he shall have to pay; and therefore his case differs from the present, where there is no option. He saw another objection to it, in the discretion which the present measure gave to government. Ministers were left to fix the standard; and he saw no reason for their fixing on the standard they had adopted.

Lord *Hawkesbury* said, that the question was not so much whether the tax was an equal one, as whether it was as equal as possible—whether it was not more so than any other that could be devised. Nothing had been offered in the way of substitute. The bill under consideration was not oppressive in any degree that could be avoided, and the tax it sought to impose had for its object to raise a great part of the supplies within the year. It was clearly the only tax adequate to this great purpose, and better than any optional tax. An hon. gentleman had again quoted Adam Smith to illustrate his argument, that property should not be exposed by any tax. But what was property? and who were the rich? Property was the command of the luxuries and necessaries of life; and the rich were the distributors. From this it followed, that whatever tax affected the poor, must necessarily affect the rich. The present bill would lay a tax generally on all with less convulsion in all the classes of society than would be occasioned by any other tax.

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Sir *F. Baring* had no objection to pay one tenth of his income, and every mercantile man with whom he had conversed appeared equally willing to pay in a similar proportion towards the exigencies of the state. But what he objected to was, that the tax would subject men to a disclosure of their property. The wealthy and the poor had equally to dread the effect of such a tax.

Mr. *H. Thornton* said, that the principle of the bill met his approbation. The object of the tax was, to enable us to carry on the war with vigour and effect. This was no ordinary measure, and ordinary objections could not, with any propriety, be urged against it. He thought those gentlemen wrong who sought to lay the tax on property; for the disclosure of property must be more objectionable to every class of men, as it would be more indelicate than the disclosure of income. Perhaps it would be better to lay a tax both on capital and income, than on income only; for a tax on capital would reduce the tax on income. He must approve of the present tax, especially as no other measure was proposed adequate to the object sought for, and seeing that the only point at which we were vulnerable to the enemy was our finances. If any one looked at the national debt, so much increased since the American war, they must see that it could not be increased illimitably, nor could the taxes on consumable articles. It was therefore necessary to reduce the debt, and provide in a different way for the interest.

The report was then agreed to.

Dec. 31. On the order of the day for the third reading of the bill,

Mr. *Nicholls* opposed the measure, as introducing a new mode of taxation. One of the arguments urged in defence of the bill was, that the people had been accustomed to taxes upon income, and the land tax had been mentioned as an instance of a tax upon income. The latter, however, was a tax upon visible income, whereas the former was one upon supposed income. In laying on the land tax, great care was taken that the subject should not be brought into contest with the government. The sum to be raised was laid upon the country generally, and then it was subdivided among the different districts. When any dispute arose, the individual had his fellow-subject and not government to contend with. This was a wise provision of our ancestors, because they knew that such contests were not consistent with civil liberty. It appeared to him, that the tribunal which was to decide upon disputed questions, was one that must be devoted to government. It was absurd to suppose that country gentlemen could be converted into executors of revenue. But it was of little consequence how the tribunal was now constituted. Since they had granted one-tenth of their income, they must agree to the means of raising it; the minister would come another year and say, "My mechanism is not complete: you must give me the means of carrying the principle to which you have agreed into execution." This would be a fair demand on the part of the minister, and he did not see how they could refuse it. This measure not only exposed the individual to a contest with government, but it harassed and subdued him before he entered into that contest. The people had a right to examine into the conduct of government; but how could they exercise that right when every individual was at the mercy of government? The bill had been termed a salvage, which the people were to pay for the protection of the remainder of their property. He thought a loan would have been a better way of raising the money. With respect to the sinking fund, he said it was calculated to increase the public debt, which had, in fact been doubled since it was established.

Mr. *Abbot* rose to declare his approbation of the measure, in which opinion of it he was happy in not standing alone, as a very great majority of the people had manifested their public spirit, and the just sense they entertained of the cause they were embarked in, by approving of the principle of the bill, and acknowledging the sound policy of raising a considerable part of the supplies within the year. Among those who stood foremost in the support of the measure, were to be reckoned a description of persons, who, from their habits and occupations in life, should be supposed to be the most conversant in the financial concerns of the country—he meant the leading mercantile and monied men in the metropolis. These had not only assented to the measure, but had declared their opinion, that income was one of the most proper objects of taxation—and on the general principle that all income should be rated as it was found, without a reference to particular cases; and, indeed, it was on this principle that all modes of direct tax-

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ation whatsoever operated. As a striking instance of this, let gentlemen consider the principle of the poor laws; they operated precisely as the bill in question professed to do; and the principle of the poor laws was never yet called in question. One of the prominent features of the measure was, the increasing scale from a low beginning up to a certain amount, by which it was to affect income; and by the peculiar mode laid down, the poorer classes in society were wholly exempted. To the principle of the bill, several precedents in the history of the country clearly applied; for instance, the poll tax in the reign of king William. Another peculiar feature in the bill was, its being more comprehensive in its operation than former plans of taxation on a similar principle, and less liable to objection. It afforded the best species of relief against the possible oppression of those who might act under its authority, and every possible regard was paid to the feelings of individuals. Besides, the mode of collection prescribed by it was economical beyond example. The provisions in the bill, which went to implicate the property of absentees, were deserving of much commendation, and calculated to render a species of property serviceable to the state which hitherto had not contributed its due share. Indeed, this principle was not carried far enough; he saw no reason why the property of foreigners resident abroad should not be taxed. It was fair that property which here found a safe asylum, should pay for that protection which it enjoyed. It was said that this measure was unconstitutional. It was easy to assert this of any measure. It had a popular sound, and was calculated to excite alarm. He did not regret that the people of this country should be ready to take the alarm at the very idea of a measure being unconstitutional. It was right that they should be jealous of a constitution to which they owed so much happiness. It was not so easy, however, to show that it was an unconstitutional measure. It gave no new powers to the crown; the commissioners were named by parliament. The oath to be taken was likewise objected to. It should be remembered, however, that the commissioners of the land tax had long had the power. With respect to appeal, it was a thing which existed in all modes of administering justice, and was necessary for the fair application of the act. As to disclosure, he was of opinion that there was a good deal of prejudice on the subject of concealment. Considering the regulations to preserve secrecy, he thought there was not much to be apprehended on that ground. The prejudice concerning disclosure was stronger in this country than in any other in Europe. In Scotland all transactions respecting real property, and many with regard to personal property, were publicly registered. In Ireland the same practice prevailed in the case of real property. In York and Middlesex it existed to a considerable extent. In the United States of America there were public registers for transactions; nor was it found in the cases where these means of avoiding concealment prevailed, that they were attended with inconvenience. Upon the whole, he highly approved of the measure. The sinking fund would gradually diminish the weight of the public debt, and measures like the present would prevent the increase of the permanent taxes.

Mr. *Tierney* said, that with respect to the hon. gentleman's idea that the mode of taxation in question did not proceed upon a new principle, he would contend that the principle, strictly speaking, was new. He believed no precedent could be found, where men were compellable to state upon oath what they were able to pay. Something like it, however, had occurred during the administration of cardinal Wolsey; but the measure was regarded by historians as a violent stretch of arbitrary power. With regard to the poll tax, the similitude did not hold good; in that case, a person had a certain given sum to pay, and no more—the account was arbitrarily levied, but then the sum was clearly defined, and no disclosure was necessary. In the reign of Henry 7th, a measure not dissimilar was resorted to. It was commonly called "lord chancellor Morton's dilemma." The direction given for the levying of the tax ran to this effect—if a man lives on a saving plan, you are to consider him as possessed of property in consequence of his economy. If he lives extravagantly—that is certainly a proof of his having something. He was convinced that a less objectionable mode could easily be found. He averred that no direct precedent could be found for the disclosure of income upon oath. There was a particular mode of levying money, which obtained in the early part of our history. The mode he alluded to was called the Jew's Ransom; it was that

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a tooth was drawn every day from certain persons of that persuasion, until they paid the tax imposed upon them. One jew at Bristol was so obstinate as to have six or seven teeth drawn before he paid. With regard to a general tax upon income, he objected to it, on the ground chiefly that all income was not disposable property. The principle that every man should contribute according to his means, he approved; but income was a very inadequate criterion. The difference between incomes was obvious. A person possessing permanent and independent income might spend what portion of it he chose, without injury to his heirs; but income resulting from personal industry, or from professions, was very different: it was necessary that a part of the incomes of these descriptions should be laid by as a provision for old age. He would say, that the plan of increasing the assessed taxes was a better expedient than the present. Then why not try it, modified and improved, for another year? The deficiency to which the assessed taxes might be liable, below the ten millions required in the present year, could, he thought, be easily provided. He then proceeded to detail a variety of objections against the bill, and expressed his fears that one of the worst effects of the measure would be, that it would destroy British feelings, and render their country less dear to Englishmen, by abridging their comforts in it.

Mr. *Patten* approved of the measure. It arose from the unanimous sentiment of all public-spirited men, and their wish to prosecute, to an honourable conclusion, a just and necessary war. It was no convulsive effort of expiring finance to carry on the war for another year; but the genuine tribute of a patriotic people in support of a constitution, and an order of things, under which they possessed such inestimable advantages.

Mr. *Perceval* contended, that the measure would cut up by the roots all the hopes the enemy so fondly entertained from the downfall of our funding system, while it must convince them that we still possessed resources fully equal to any emergency. Neither would it trench on the liberties or comforts of the present race. There were only five or six gentlemen in the House who disapproved of it, and perhaps a few out of the House. The enemy, therefore, must see that they had a whole country unanimous against them.

The question being put, That the bill be read a third time, the House divided:

Tellers.

YEAS	Sir William Young Mr. Perceval	93
NOES	Mr. Tierney Mr. William Smith	2

The Bill was then read a third time.

Debate on Mr. Tierney's Complaint against "The Times" Newspaper for misrepresenting the Speeches of the Members.] Dec. 27. Mr. *Tierney* said: I am extremely sorry to be under the necessity of calling the attention of the House to what I deem to be a breach of its privileges. No member would be less desirous than myself to curtail the liberty which the House has allowed to the editors of newspapers, of gratifying the curiosity of the public, by publishing its debates. No member is more willing to make a liberal allowance for those inaccuracies to which publications made in so great a hurry must be incident. I am the more ready to do this, because it is my real opinion that the editors and conductors of the papers in general, whatever their party attachments may be, use their utmost efforts, for the sake of the credit and character of their respective publications, to give the substance of the speeches of members with every possible degree of accuracy. No man, therefore, would be more desirous to overlook any inaccuracy arising from the hurry in which the debates must be written by those who report them. But I conceive it to be a very different case, where a statement is made in any newspaper, purporting to be a conversation between two members published four days after the debate to which it alludes actually took place, and not only misrepresenting the debate, but containing animadversions on it. In such a case, I hold it to be a duty to bring the matter before the House. A few evenings ago, I mentioned that a distinguished person at the period of the triple assessment, had thought it neither a sin nor a shame to evade the payment of his taxes; that he was in possession of a very handsome pension; but having in view a place of greater importance, he had resigned his pension, taken advantage of the interval, and made a return of neither one nor the other. In the course of that debate, I was called upon to name the person I alluded to; but for reasons which I then thought of sufficient weight, I declined doing so. It is but doing justice to the right hon. gen-

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tleman opposite to declare, that during the whole of the conversation which took place on that subject, he acted with the utmost candour: he unequivocally avowed that he believed I had mentioned the circumstance merely by way of illustration; and on finding, from the whispers that went round the House, as well as from other circumstances, which did not at first strike him, that the allusion was made to a certain noble person, he had fairly and candidly declared, that if I meant that nobleman, I was altogether misinformed, for that he had not only given in his full quota of assessment, but had actually contributed double that sum by way of voluntary contribution; so that, in fact, he paid a fifth I must own, I was struck with this open and unreserved avowal of the right hon. gentleman, and did not hesitate to say, that, supposing the facts to be as he had then stated them, I must undoubtedly be wrong; and here, I imagined, the matter would have ended. However, in a paper called "The Times," published on the 26th of December, four days after the debate alluded to took place, and which I now hold in my hand, there is a publication under the head of "A Conversation between Mr. Pitt and Mr. Tierney," containing not only the supposed substance of what passed in that debate, but also several animadversions on the subject matter thereof. As to political animadversions applied to myself, I have been so much used to them of late, that I have ever treated them with that indifference which they generally merit. But, in addition to these, the report I allude to, and which fills four columns, is replete with the most glaring misrepresentations, which I conceive to convey a marked disrespect for the House, and which I hope the House will, in justice to themselves, deem worthy their most serious notice. From the particular situation of the paper called "The Times," it becomes still more deserving the attention of the House. It is well known, that the property of that paper is so valuable a one, from the great number of advertisements, that the owners of it would not suffer four columns to be filled with any speeches whatever, out of the regular course of reporting a debate, without being paid for it very handsomely. From this circumstance, there is good reason to infer that this misrepresentation of which I complain, has been sent to "The Times," and the insertion paid for. I shall conclude with moving, "That the insertion of such misrepresentations and misstatements as are contained in the paper of "The Times," now in my hand, is a breach of the privilege of this House."

The *Speaker* said, that by a standing order of that House, no editor of a newspaper was at liberty to give any account of its proceedings; but it was necessary that the complaint should be expressly stated before any order of that House could be made in consequence.

Mr. *Tierney* said, his only ground of complaint was, that the editor of "The Times," did not state his share in the debate, in the manner it had been taken by him; and the aggravation of this complaint was, that this misrepresentation did not arise from the hurry of reporting after the House broke up, but was made after a lapse of four days, which circumstance carried upon the face of it a design of wilful misrepresentation, especially as the report was intermixed with the editor's political animadversions.

The *Speaker* said, that the foundation of the complaint, if brought before the House, must be a violation of one of its standing orders, which forbad the publication of its proceedings. In 1771 something similar had occurred; and then, the complaint brought forward was twofold: first, for publishing an account of the debate, and secondly, for misrepresenting it.* He was afraid there would be some embarrassment betwixt the standing order of the House, and the specific ground on which the hon. gentleman made his complaint. The hon. gentleman did not complain of the publication of the debate, but of misrepresentation; but if the House should confine itself to receiving this complaint, it would appear as if it had lost sight of its own general standing order. His opinion was, that it would be right first to complain of the printer of "The Times" for having published the debate, and, then, as an aggravation, to complain of the misrepresentation of that debate; but it would be impossible for the House to take up the complaint on the latter ground only, and not to include the publication as well as the misrepresentation.

Mr. *Tierney* then said: I do complain of the publication, and of the misrepresentation. And upon the suggestion of the Speaker, the motion which he made ran thus: "Complaint being made to the

* See the proceedings against the Printers for publishing the Debates, Vol. 17, p. 58.

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House, of the printed newspaper, entitled, "The Times, Wednesday, Dec. 26, 1798," London: Printed at the Printing Office, in Printing House Square, Blackfriars, by C. Bell, and published by J. Bonsor, as containing an account of the debates, and misrepresenting the speeches of some of the members of this House, in contempt of the orders, and in breach of the privilege, of this House." The said paper having been delivered in, and one of the paragraphs complained of read,

Mr. *Pitt* said:—I do not rise to oppose the motion. Not having seen the paper alluded to, it is impossible for me to have any farther knowledge of its contents than what I have been able to collect from the statement made by the hon. gentleman; but as it relates to what passed a few evenings ago, I beg to say a few words on it now. The hon. gentleman has candidly stated what then fell from me on that subject. And I have no doubt now, that what the hon. gentleman then stated was intended by him merely in illustration. But though the hon. gentleman has confessed that, according to my statements, he was in the wrong, yet he has not made any answer to the question, whether the noble personage to whom I alluded, was the same person he meant. I hope the hon. gentleman will have the candour, so far to clear up the point as to give an explicit answer to that question. And now, having said thus much on this particular subject, I beg leave to offer a few words on the point immediately under the consideration of the House. I am clearly of opinion with you, Sir, that if the House take up this business at all, it will be necessary in the first place to advert to the breach of the standing order of the House, which forbids any publication of what passes in it. It will be for the House to consider how far they will wave the consideration of the repeated breaches which have been made, with regard to this order. I should be very sorry to interpose the authority of the House in restricting what has long been permitted, as a medium of communication between this House and the public. But, Sir, the daily occasions which are given by the public prints for complaints from every quarter of the House of misrepresenting and misstating what passes in it, require the attentive consideration of the House, to devise some means of checking or preventing this growing abuse.

Mr. *Tierney* said, that lord Auckland was the person alluded to. The mistake had originated in a misstatement of the fortune of that noble lord. The right hon. gentleman, however, had stated from his personal knowledge, that the account was utterly unfounded. He now, therefore, withdrew his sanction from a statement which had come to him as a rumour.

Mr. Secretary *Dundas* said, he thought the hon. gentleman must now have attained the object he had in view in bringing in this complaint. It was certainly true that misrepresentation was an aggravation of the breach of privilege in printing the proceedings of the House at all: but the breach of privilege was what the House had to consider. If the hon. gentleman was not content with stating the complaint for the purpose of correcting an error, which probably would be corrected by what had now passed in the very same paper to-morrow, the complaint must go a great deal farther than the hon. gentleman might intend. Every other person who had published the proceedings alluded to, must likewise be called up. He thought, therefore, that it would be better at present to withdraw the motion. If the object in view was the protection of the privileges of the House, this would be attained; as what had already taken place would show that the House was determined to go to the rigour of its privileges, if they were abused. If it was persisted in, no distinction could be made; and those who had been equally guilty of a breach of the privileges of this House as the printer in question, would be equally liable to its animadversion.

Mr. *Tierney* said, that this case differed widely from every other. The account was inserted several days after the conversation had taken place, and professed to correct other statements. As to the motion, he thought it belonged to the House to dispose of it. He should not withdraw it. He did feel it as a malevolent attempt to excite animosities between individuals, and he was convinced that its insertion had been paid for by some persons in this view.

Mr. *Windham* (Secretary at War) said, that since this subject was brought before the House, they had no option, under their order, with respect to the vote they were to give, and he hoped it would have the effect to correct a practice which he had even thought before he was in parliament, and since he had been in it, an intolerable abuse, materially affecting not

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only the dignity of the House, but the interests of the country. These disadvantages resulted from it, independent of the misrepresentations so justly complained of. He hoped therefore that this complaint would operate as a check, and remove any false impressions as to the reasons which had induced the House to permit the practice. He assented to the motion, not on account of the injustice which the hon. gentleman had suffered, though he should not be less sensible of the injustice done to him than to any other member, but on the general ground, that a particular case of injustice was vastly subordinate to the great object of protecting the privileges of the House, which were violated by the publication of their proceedings at all. However long the House had connived at the practice, he should be sorry that the question should go off without the House giving an opinion upon the important subject of these privileges. He had stated his opinion on the general point. As to the misrepresentations complained of, it was impossible to expect that daily subject of complaint would not occur when the situation of persons concerned in the employment, and the influence of every kind to which they were subject, was considered. This practice had grown into a great evil, and it was but of recent origin; nor did he think that parliament, in former times, had been so ignorant of what was proper to be done with regard to the regulation of their privileges, and that it was only in modern times that we had discovered what was the proper course to follow.

Mr. *Martin* wished the matter to be now decided. There was no occasion for farther warning, after what had been said a few days ago by an hon. gentleman. He had long observed the misrepresentations which were given of what passed in the House; and thought that those who wrote the reports made gentlemen say just what they themselves pleased.

Mr. *W. Smith* said, that gentlemen did not seem willing to observe the distinction between this case and others where misrepresentation might exist. However the orders of the House might consider the publication as the chief offence, gentlemen's minds must take into consideration the intention with which a misrepresentation was accompanied. If misrepresentation was an aggravation of the breach of privilege, the intention was an aggravation of that misrepresentation. A report made up in a few hours ought to be distinguished from an account which had been considered for several days; and he left it to gentlemen to judge, whether there was not here an intention to convert reports into a vehicle of attack upon the members of the House.

Mr. *Wilberforce* said, he stood in a particular situation in regard to the question. He certainly, the other night, declared it to be his opinion, that it became the House, for the credit and the character of individuals in certain respects, but for the great object which the House ought always to have in view, the character of the House of Commons and the safety of the constitution, to provide some remedy against the misrepresentations of the proceedings of parliament, which had of late arisen to a height too great to be allowed to continue. All that had passed since had not contributed to alter his opinion. But although the article now complained of by the hon. gentleman might be liable to censure, yet he must observe, that to take this paper, and this only, as one that ought to be the object of censure, would be a very unfair mode of proceeding. But with regard to the sort of reflection that had been cast upon him, he could not help observing, that there seemed to be a disposition in some gentlemen to take notice always of the manner in which he spoke his sentiments in that House, and it was rather insinuated, as if he was actuated by some angry motives in what he said. He thought this a little extraordinary to come from some gentlemen who had for a long time been acquainted with him. Perhaps from a natural warmth of temper, he was led sometimes to speak in a manner that was more acrimonious than he might wish; his motives, however, were always the same, and all his conduct tended to one point, the good of the public. Be these things as they might, he should always express his opinions freely; and now that he was upon this subject, he should take the liberty of saying, there was a very common practice in that House, which, for its honour and dignity, he wished to be discontinued. Gentlemen were in the habit of speaking of one another in a fulsome style of compliment, in a way that might, perhaps, please some bystanders, but which neither aided the debate, nor had the least tincture of sincerity in it; and the very members themselves, who used that sort of language in the House, treated it every where else as

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empty sound and flirting nonsense. This was a practice that did no credit to the House, and he, for one, wished to see it set aside, and the language of sincerity adopted. With respect to the question before the House, he never wished to put a stop to the fair statement of the proceedings of parliament. It had long been a desire with him, that they should be accurately given to the public; and he should look back with pleasure to the moment of his life, in which he was aware he had been in any degree instrumental in bringing about that desired object. But he must repeat, that if any notice was to be taken by the House of the inaccuracy of newspapers, this paper should not be the only one complained of, while there were others equally faulty.

Mr. *Pitt* thought it would be much better to defer this debate, as it involved a point of great importance; namely, the mode in which the matter should be disposed of. On the question of the standing order there could be no difference of opinion; but on the other points many arguments ought to be urged, and when they came forward, no doubt the House would give to them the attention they should merit. He would observe, however, in passing, that if any determination was come to upon the paper now complained of, the House owed it to its justice to adopt the same with regard to others. After the long connivance of the House at the publication of its proceedings, and the gross abuse of that connivance, it would be inconsistent with the dignity or the justice of the House to make any partial order upon this particular case. What had already happened might be considered as a fair warning to others. If the particular passages complained of in this paper were to be pointed out, he thought that the regular way would be to adjourn the debate to some future day.

The further consideration of the matter of the said Complaint was then adjourned till the 31st.

Dec. 31. The House having resumed, according to order, the adjourned consideration of the said Complaint,

Mr. *Tierney* said, it was his wish that the said order should be discharged. He had been assured that the editor of "The Times" paper did not wish to give an inaccurate account of what had passed in the House, and he had good reason to believe that the account was sent to the editor by some person whose object it was to misrepresent what had happened, but which person, he feared, he should never be able to bring forward. Indeed, the editors of papers having no interest in misrepresenting what passed in the House, but, on the contrary, a direct interest in the accuracy of the accounts they gave, he did not think they would designedly misrepresent any thing. But when an account was brought to a newspaper several days after the occurrence took place, and was inserted as an advertisement, the case was different, and there the intention of the misrepresentation was manifest, and the evil was greater too than if it appeared the day following the date; in the one case, the error was likely to be detected by comparing one paper with another; but when it was published several days afterwards, that advantage was lost. There was no reason, however, in this case to impute to the editor of "The Times" any design to misrepresent what had taken place in the House. As it was clear that somebody had brought the account, and paid for it as an advertisement, and as he could not bring forward the author, it would be unjust to call upon the House to censure the editor. He would therefore move "That the said order be discharged."

Mr. *Windham* (Secretary at War) observed, that the hon. gentleman might act as he thought proper, either to call for, or to desire to withdraw, the attention of the House from the matter now before it, and so far as it regarded the personal feeling of the hon. gentleman, no person had a right to judge upon the matter but himself; but when this subject came before the House, he would say, without any disrespect whatever to the hon. gentleman, that his feeling upon the matter was by far the least important part of it. This distinction was not much entered into when this subject was first introduced to the notice of the House; but now that it came before the House, he should consider the question of a breach of privilege upon its broad principle as it affected the state, and not as a narrow question of personal feeling. The nature of the question was the same whatever accident had brought it before the House, or whatever connivance might be imputed to the House with regard to the publishing the reports of its proceedings; and therefore he should proceed on the question itself, without re-

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gard to the mode in which it had been brought forward to the notice of the House. To proceed on an offence against the hon. gentleman who had complained of it, and to treat it as an act of guilt, as a libel upon that hon. gentleman, without taking notice of it as a breach of the privilege of that House, could not be regularly done. To treat it with severity at once in the person of the offender, was what he would not recommend, not only because there were other accounts of debates in which the name of the same hon. gentleman occurred, in which aspersions of the most malignant kind were poured forth and which had hitherto passed in silence, but also because he thought it would be hardly fair, now that they had a particular individual in their power, to proceed to extremities with him in the first instance, and, as it were, on a sudden and without notice. There were many instances of crimes in which the offender was not punished to the utmost rigour in the first instance: in the case of a highway robbery the law was to be pronounced at once, but not so in offences of inferior degree; and in some cases where the complexion of the thing was uncertain, where the intention of the party was doubtful, he could not think of calling for the vengeance of the law. So in this case, although the thing itself was decidedly illegal, yet as some persons might have been led to think that the opinion of the legislature upon the propriety of conniving at the matter was altered, and that such connivance to a certain degree warranted the practice, those who acted, however erroneously, on that opinion, had a claim, if not upon the justice, at least upon the generosity of the House. But it would be dangerous to indulge any disposition to lenity in the second instance, for that led to a repetition of the argument by which the practice was attempted to be supported; for if the connivance of yesterday be a reason for to-day, to-morrow the reason will be stronger than it is now, and indulgence will give birth to the assumption of right; and thus the House, if they did determine upon the first case that came before it, would soon be debarred from vindicating, without the imputation of harshness, its own privilege. He thought that the conduct of the House would be rigid, if it proceeded to extremity on this sudden occasion; but he thought that an end ought to be put to that relaxation of duty by which the reporters of newspapers had been permitted to publish their proceedings; for it was a growing evil. After having had fair warning, they would not have any reason to complain; for they ought to be taught that there was to be an end of the practice of detailing the proceedings of the House; and although they could not pass over altogether the case of the person now before them, but must censure his conduct in this first instance of their notice, yet, if any one should hereafter offend, he should be treated with greater severity. Perhaps he felt more strongly than others the effect of this practice of reporting the proceedings of the House, and therefore was more ready than others to call for a remedy for the evil of relaxation of the duty of the House, it being only from that relaxation that such a practice could possibly arise. He knew a number of persons who held all these things extremely cheap, and therefore would be ready to look with compassionate feelings towards those who became the object of the resentment of the House for publishing any of its proceedings—who would smile at all these irregularities as trifles below the grave attention of a House of Parliament. He had no great respect for that sort of wisdom in itself. He knew how things apparently trivial in their nature produced prodigious effects. To things in their appearance trivial at first sight, was owing the downfall of France. Things of a trivial nature were passed by as unworthy of notice, and, in less than twelve months afterwards, there tumbled a whole kingdom into a heap of ruins, and with its fall there appeared calamities which no mortal, not bereft of the feelings of humanity, could behold without horror. He therefore wished not to possess that species of philosophy which teaches us to despise trifling things; on the contrary, he saw great things arising out of those that were apparently little. Indeed, the whole system of human nature showed how attentive we ought to be to those things that were commonly called trifles, since the existence of human life frequently depended upon them. If, therefore, this doctrine was applicable to the safety of the human frame, how could it be otherwise with regard to human institutions? He thought the practice that had prevailed now for a considerable number of years was calculated to produce very serious consequences: for the general tendency of

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publishing the proceedings of that House was to change the government from a representative, to an entirely democratic one. But to take a consideration of two things, a purely democratic government, and a representative one, such as ours was at present: let us take a view of what was urged by some as the desirable perfection of our system, and what never, in fact, existed in the world—that all the people were actually represented, as well as virtually, and then let us see what the effect would be of publishing the proceedings of parliament to all the people. What would be the natural effect of such publication? It must be that of changing the present form of government, and of making it democratical; for it was calling every day on the public to judge of the proceedings of parliament. By these daily publications the people were taught to look upon themselves as present at the discussion of all the proceedings of parliament, and sitting in judgment on them. This might be a very good and a very wise change when effected; but that he was not now arguing: he was only showing that this change would be the consequence of the practice to which he had alluded. The change of the present government of the country into a democratical government, might be very good in the opinion of some; but certainly none would dispute it was a very great and material change—that it would be a material change, the proceedings of this day illustrated. How came this practice of reporting the proceedings of parliament into being? It was not much above twenty years ago since it was first tolerated. Some of the predecessors of the Speaker now in the chair (Mr. Cust or Mr. Onslow for instance) would have been a good deal surprised that a practice of this kind was to be at all debated in the House of Commons. Either of them would have called forth, not the discussion, but the immediate authority of the House, to take into custody any person who had presumed to publish any of its proceedings. But now, it seemed, the House was not to do this; the printer, poor innocent! had no evil intention; and therefore the motion, although involving a breach of privilege of that House, was to be withdrawn. This was very modern, and he would take leave to say, very mischievous doctrine. There would have been no difficulty about it formerly. Gentlemen might say, there was no more difficulty now than there was formerly about shutting up the gallery. He was of another opinion: if the House showed a disposition for yielding any point, its authority might, indeed, be made use of to destroy itself, for the connivance of the House had been abused, and so might his mildness: passing over such a breach of privilege after complaint made, would be an act of the House; it would have its authority; that authority would be quoted in answer to any complaint of another breach of privilege; and thus the authority of the House would be made to destroy itself. This, however, was not viewing the point in its worst colours. The House might protect itself at any time, when a breach of its privileges came before it; but this was an abuse of the constitution, and led to that condition of things in which there would be no room for prudence to conduct us—when the question would be, not for a reform, but a revolution. He should, for one, wish to see the House revert to the practice of times, when we had a constitution that was worth something. The House should now follow the same plan as they did formerly, unless it was clear that any other was better, and he had not heard it yet alleged, that the modern was superior to the ancient practice in this particular.—But to go back to the consideration that really ought to guide the House, to consider the effect of this practice in a distinct point of view: the principle on which the House proceeded in some things was, that what passed in the House would not pass out of the House, except what any member might possibly relate to his friends. This could never be mischievous, for, besides the discretion which would generally guide the conduct of a member, and would keep him from repeating any thing that might be of an inflammatory tendency, it must be confined to a few hearers, and those above the lower classes of society, therefore the less easily tainted in their principles. But, under the practice of reporting in the newspapers, every thing that was said in that House, and which could not be said with safety any where, else, was under the cover and authority of parliament, and by this legerdemain of reporting scattered all over the kingdom; so that the most rank sedition that was ever yet thought of was not confined to the hearing of the House, where the education and condition of the hearers would shield them from its influence, but was made public to all degrees and condi-

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tions, and was published with the authority of a member of parliament, as a report of what was said, which could not any where else be published as an original work. Such things appeared to him to be monstrous. If any body were to ask him what he thought was the cause of the dreadful mutiny last year, which so reasonably alarmed every good man, and which, but for the vigorous exertions of government, would soon have reduced this country to nothing, he would say, it was the daily publication of the debates of that House more than any thing else. He was not complaining of gentlemen for saying the war was unjust and unnecessary: if they thought so, they were right in so saying. But was it a desirable thing that the public at large, that the lower classes of the community from one end of the kingdom to the other, should, from day to day be told so? That the sailors and the soldiers should be told that they were fighting against justice and against the liberty of mankind; that they were the tools of despotic power, that their blood was shed, their lives sacrificed, to the folly or the wickedness of those by whom they were governed?—and all this coming from men of great weight from their talents, and in many respects of great credit in the country. Supposing all this language to be proper, he was saying that the effect of it must necessarily be dreadful to the community in which we live. It was then a question, whether the House was justified in allowing to exist a cause which produced that effect, and that cause, too, arising out of a breach of the privilege of the House? It might be said, that this was answered by the publication of the doctrine maintained on the other side. But this did not satisfy his mind. It led to a question that was too long for discussion in that House upon the present occasion, and opened a view into the general theme of political institution, and the means of diffusing throughout the world all species of political instruction. And here there was to be dreaded a double misrepresentation—the misrepresentation of the abuse, and the misrepresentation of the defence of government; and therefore he who objected to the publication of either could hardly be said to be contented with the publication of both. Yet, if all this was only addressed to persons of great judgment, perhaps he should not object to it. But that was by no means the case; for the great mass of the readers of newspapers were not the most discerning class of society, nor was it to be expected they should be so, for the advertisements and other articles of which a newspaper was composed were often interesting chiefly to the lower orders of the community. They were for this very reason carried every where, read every where, by persons of very inferior capacities, and in common alehouses and places frequented chiefly by those who were least of all accustomed to reflection, to any great mental efforts. Gentlemen might say, "Let all persons be allowed to judge for themselves." This sounded pretty well; but it was a mere sound Mankind had never yet been in circumstances that enabled the mass of them to judge correctly of any thing that required much mental exertion. Condemned as they were to labour of body, it had not yet been practicable for them to judge correctly of abstruse questions; and he knew of none that were more so, than such as arose out of the complication of political affairs. The people at large were entitled to justice—they were entitled to every favour that could be shown to them consistently with their own safety, on which depended their own happiness—they were entitled to every advantage they could possibly be capable of enjoying, as much as the proudest person in the state; but they had not education to enable them to judge of political affairs. Those were not their best friends who told them otherwise. If any gentlemen who heard him doubted this, he would ask them, whether they were in the habit of calling in their gardeners and their grooms to give their opinions upon political affairs? He knew they would do so when they met in large bodies, and made up the bulk of a gentleman's constituents, especially when their opinions were to be followed up by their votes; for then the cajoling arts of the true demagogue were put in practice, and then was the multitude tempted, as the devil tempted Eve, by telling them they had all sorts of perfection. After reflecting upon this, he hoped gentlemen would not be so ready to talk of the competency of the multitude to form correct opinions upon political affairs.—But it might be said, that if the reports of the newspapers were stopped, some means would be found to circulate sentiments against government, and that they would be more

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injurious to the public than these: that something like Paine's Rights of Man would go forth. Such publications were circulated certainly, and they did very considerable mischief; but they could not possibly have the effect of the newspapers, because as the circulation of them was attended with considerable expense, it could not be so extensive as the newspapers were, and therefore not such an evil; nor were they so constant. It might be said, that by the publication of the debates of parliament, the bane and antidote go both together. He did not think that such had hitherto been the effect of the publication of the debates; and he knew of nothing so likely to guide the judgment rightly as experience. In fact, the practice of reporting debates for the last fifteen or sixteen years, had contributed more to the evils of which many had complained, than any other practice he had heard of in that time. It was an evil in its nature; it was an inflammatory information at the best; it kindled over again and spread all over the country, that heat among the lower classes, which was sometimes deprecated even in that House, as being likely to mislead those who possessed the best means of forming correct judgments. Such were the evils of teaching the lower classes of the community that they were politicians.—Now if these were his ideas on the general effects of this practice, how did the case stand upon particular points that were to be considered incidentally? It was a practice that struck directly at the dignity of the House. What was to be the character of that House in the eye of the public, if what passed in it was not only to be reported in the newspapers, but a description was to be given also of the tone, manner, and action of each member, like that of a criticism upon another description of persons, of whom he had no disposition to speak contumeliously, but of whom it was no disparagement to say, they were more adapted than the senate for public entertainment—he meant persons who were called actors. What was to become of the dignity of that House, he would ask, if the manners and gestures and tone and action of each member, were to be subject to the licence, the abuse, the ribaldry of newspapers? There were but two remedies for this, as the practice now was, either for a member to condescend to an altercation in the newspapers with those who ridiculed him, or, what was the common case, to sit down tamely under it. Really, unless the House thought it worth while to support its own dignity better, it hardly deserved better usage! But they would do well to take notice, what the effect might in time be of this ill-judged good nature. They might fall in the public estimation, as did another assembly in another country, who soon felt the effect of letting strangers into their galleries, under the pretence, that the proceedings of the representative body should be open, and that no part of the people should be excluded from hearing it. The rabble of Paris, by bribery and other despicable practices, got into the galleries, and their presence soon put an end to the representation of the country; it was soon turned into the mere semblance of a representation. If that House was to give up its privilege, merely because it had for a while connived at the abuse of it; if the House was to be said to have the power of stopping up the footpath, and yet would not exclude a single passenger, he would have nothing farther to say. Gentlemen might talk of the matter as lightly as they pleased; but, unless they vindicated their privileges now, they might feel the effect of an ill-judged lenity. —But he should leave this point now, and go back again to another evil of which he had before complained, namely, that suffering newspapers to publish reports of their proceedings, would be allowing the evil itself to increase every day, for that very sufferance had of itself given occasion for the multiplication of public prints. The practice of publishing debates was an appeal from the representative body, to the people at large out of doors, of all orders, from the highest to the lowest. That newspaper writers were not the best judges of political affairs he considered as an undisputed point—to say nothing of their integrity; and this he conceived also to be an important point. That a great many of these newspapers were brought into existence and nourished by debates in parliament, was also a clear point; for he knew, that when there was a complaint made against a printer in the year 1771, his plea was, that if the House took away from him the power of publishing the debates of that House, they would take away from him his bread.* The House, if it allowed these debates to be continued, would put in action a poison which was

* See Vol. 17, p. 87 and 89.

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circulated every twenty-four hours, and spread its venom down to the extremity of the kingdom. What, in the course of a very few years, was likely to be the effect of such a practice; into what hands newspapers would fall, whether they were likely to be friendly to good morals in future, from the specimen we had seen of them of late years, were points into which he would not now inquire. The question was not only whom these papers would find out, but also who would find out these papers, what sort of talents the owners of them were likely to possess, or, what was a larger question, what sort of talents those who were owners of papers might employ to write for them, were all of them points well worthy of the speculation of the House. Before they allowed newspapers to detail their proceedings, they would do well to consider how those who wrote for newspapers in general had contributed to the overthrow of the different governments of the world which had been lately overturned, and had been employed in causing so many insurrections as had lately rendered so much of the habitable globe uneasy.—How much of the talents of those who wrote for newspapers had been employed in scattering poison wherever they could; in bringing virtue into discredit, by telling the people every where that those who professed it, and who ought to possess it, and who in general did possess virtue, had no virtue whatever, by teaching the ignorant and the credulous to despise every man and every measure that was respectable. Such were the efforts, generally speaking, of those who wrote for newspapers. He felt this so forcibly, that he confessed he never saw any man of a low condition with a newspaper in his hand, and who read any of it, without comparing him to a man who was swallowing poison under the hope of improving his health. He was not to be led away with any notions that might be entertained by some persons concerning the liberty of the press. Before any good could be done by the discussion of political subjects in newspapers, the capacity of the people must be enlarged.—These were only a few of the objections which he felt to the publication of parliamentary proceedings in newspapers. It lessened the dignity of the House of Commons: it put the members of it in a situation in which they ought not to stand; it fomented discontents throughout the nation; it multiplied nothing, or very rarely any thing, but that species of information which was destructive to every good principle, and was hostile to the character of every public man, or individual in whom public trust was reposed. It produced also the inconvenience of which the hon. gentleman who made this motion, but for reasons he could not well understand, wished to withdraw it, complained; but that was its least evil. But as the House had now the opportunity (which by the way had been well to have occurred sooner), it ought not to be lost; the character of the House ought to be vindicated, and the advantage of the public ought to be regarded. What course the House would take was not for him, but for others, to determine. He had no motion himself to make; he left every thing open to the House. He was desirous of delivering his sentiments on this subject, because the occasion which offered was not frequent, although the occasion which called for the animadversion and decision of the House was much too frequent; and this not because gentlemen did not know, but because they chose to abandon their privileges. He had declared his opinion on this practice of newspaper reporting. The House would judge of what was right to done. He did not wish to say any thing more, whether the House ought now to come to a decision of either confirming the old practice of prohibition, or of favouring the relaxation of very modern times. He had now no other duty to discharge to that House, except returning thanks for the indulgence with which he had been heard.

Mr. *Wilberforce* observed, that though the disposition of the hon. gentleman to withdraw the motion he had grounded on his complaint, rendered it unnecessary for him to trouble the House with much of what he should otherwise have judged it necessary to lay before them, yet various circumstances combined in prompting him to trespass upon their attention for a few moments, particularly after what had just fallen from his right hon. friend. He was very solicitous to prevent any possible misconstruction of the principles on which he had himself acted, in very lately pressing upon the serious consideration of the House, the scandalous misstatements of their proceedings which had become so general, and the propriety, and indeed necessity, of applying, if possible, some remedy to that great and growing evil.*

* See p. 154 of the present Volume.

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Those gentlemen who were present on that occasion would recollect that he had not intimated the slightest intention of complaining to the House of any particular publication, whatever ground he personally might have for such a complaint: his object was, a general redress of a general grievance. Nor had he expressed the smallest wish, that the House should enforce its standing order, and prevent altogether the publication of its proceedings. He had even then suggested, that almost any thing should be borne, and any expedient be tried, rather than resort to such a remedy: and he felt himself now called upon, by what had been stated by his right hon. friend to declare it as his fixed opinion, that (the House reserving to itself of course a right to shut its gallery, at its discretion, when the delicacy of any particular discussion might render it expedient), the publication of their debates and proceedings was not injurious, but highly beneficial to the country. He altogether differed from his right hon. friend, who had urged that it had almost changed, or at least strongly tended to change, the nature of our constitution from representative to democratical, conceiving it to be, in fact, perfectly and strictly constitutional. The people of Great Britain indeed devolved on the representative body, for a term of years, the duty of watching over their rights and interests; but did it follow that they were not to pay attention to the conduct and language of those representatives in the execution of the trust reposed? How, then, should they be qualified, at the end of the term, for judging whether to continue the trust in the same hands, or transfer it to others? He did not hesitate to declare, that in general those persons who were for ever improperly busying themselves in politics were among the least useful, and least worthy, members of the community: but the constituent, no less than the representative, had a duty to discharge, and how should he discharge it well, without the necessary means of information? But in truth he must say, that experience completely refuted his right hon. friend's assertion; for, notwithstanding all the misrepresentations which had prevailed, he had the satisfaction of being able to declare that the happiest consequences had actually followed from the notoriety of their debates, and from the eye of the public having been fixed upon them. So far from their having thereby at all lost their specific character, he believed there never was a time when the representative body possessed a higher place in the respect and affections of the people.—He trusted the discussion of that day would not be wholly without its use: that though he, and he trusted a large majority of the House, was friendly to the publication of their proceedings, and though even if this were otherwise, it would be highly unjust in the House without notice to punish persons for the breach of a standing order, which, for so many years, they had neglected to enforce; yet it would be understood that the House was not wholly regardless of the manner in which their speeches and proceedings should be reported. What had now passed must be considered as a sort of notice and warning to reporters, not to presume too far upon the indulgence of the House and the patience of individuals. He trusted there would be consequently somewhat less of wilful misrepresentation than had hitherto been suffered to prevail, and he would again declare, that the more publicity was given to whatever was really said or done in parliament, the more would that House become the object of esteem and attachment to their constituents, and the nation at large.

Mr. Secretary *Dundas* said, he had long been convinced that the practice of publishing a mutilated and incorrect account of what passed in parliament, was calculated to affect the honour and the usefulness of the House. He conceived before the complaint could be withdrawn, the hon. gentleman must move for the leave of the House. It could not be allowed to stand on the Journals that the House had suffered such a complaint to drop without showing in what manner it was done. The subject ought to be considered not on personal grounds, but as something deeply connected with the usefulness and the dignity of the House. He must observe, that there were other attacks calculated to degrade and vilify the House, which ought not to pass unnoticed. There were cases in which the House was grossly libelled by its own members. But such proceedings should not go on. If any member was guilty of a libel upon it, he was determined to propose some means that should put an end to the practice, and punish the offender. He could not help referring to what had been represented to have been said by a certain hon. gentleman who had thought proper to de-

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sert his duty in parliament, at a club in this town. That gentleman, who never showed his face in the House, had gone to that club, and, if fairly represented, had uttered a gross libel on the House. Such practices should not any longer go on. There was another case, too, in which the hon. gentleman who brought forward the present complaint, was represented to have used expressions, at a meeting of some of his constituents, which were a scandalous libel on the House. He was reported to have said, that he never heard of parliament meeting for the dispatch of business, but he considered it to be for the dispatch of the property of himself and his constituents. When such things as these were passed over unnoticed, he should be hurt to death to extend the utmost rigour of the House to offences so inferior in danger and malignity. The House might rest assured that if it did not protect itself against the libellous attacks of its own members, it would in vain endeavour to repress the attacks of others. Members were protected in the House from any consequences that might arise from what they said, except what the House itself might inflict; but in return for that protection, they ought not to be permitted in other places to degrade, and vilify the House.

The said complaint was then, with leave of the House, withdrawn.

Debate in the Lords on the Habeas Corpus Suspension Bill.] January 4. 1799. On the order of the day for the third reading of the bill for suspending the Habeas Corpus act.

The Earl of *Suffolk* said, that ministers should have assigned some reason for this bill before they proposed it to the House. To bring forward a measure, at all times grievous, and an infringement of the constitution, without any necessity for it, was highly unjust; and of the necessity, there was no proof. At the same time he acknowledged, that if the state was in danger, the present measure ought to be adopted; but if ministers were to be entrusted with the power which this bill conferred upon them, they ought, at all events, to use it with moderation, and here his lordship said, he was led to reflect on the case of a gentleman, whom he had not seen for seventeen years; a man of as amiable manners and worthy disposition as any he ever knew. He alluded to colonel Despard. He knew that gentleman in the service abroad, when his lordship had a command of brigade. He had frequent occasions to converse with colonel Despard, and he was convinced, from all he saw of him, that he was a man of an excellent disposition. He knew very little of the situation of that gentleman, and therefore, if he should happen to state any thing that was not correct, he hoped he should be excused. His information was, that colonel Despard was very severely treated in the prison in which he was now confined; that he was kept in a cell of seven feet square, without fire, without light, and without any thing to rest upon but a truckle bed. If true it was a very hard case. He wished to know, whether this was a species of confinement fit for a gentleman of such a character, and against whom there was no crime alleged. He insisted that he had not been guilty of any crime, that he was entitled to be set at liberty; after which he was told there was no charge against him, for that it was his brother government wanted. Having said this, he would venture to introduce another matter, not immediately connected with the subject before the House, but of such a nature as to come naturally into view when any measure was considered that had reference to conspiracy for treason. Perhaps he might again be abused for what he was about to do, as he had been for the evidence he gave on the trial of O'Connor at Maidstone. He was in Scotland three or four months ago; and there he saw a character of the earl of Suffolk as one of the witnesses for O'Connor, in which he was most wantonly libelled, and in which it was made to appear as if he had been the intimate acquaintance of O'Connor. Now he did upon his honour most solemnly declare, that he never had any conversation with O'Connor, except one about eleven years ago, and from that conversation he was of opinion that he never met with a more gentlemanlike man in his life, and he never heard from him a sentiment that would not do honour to any man.

Lord *Grenville* said, that with regard to the newspaper misrepresentation of which the noble lord had complained, he could assure him that no one abhorred more than he did those libels with which private and public characters of every description were daily assailed. Nothing was more injurious in this country than the licence now taken by the press. Indeed it was his opinion, that if the wisdom of parlia-

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ment did not devise some means of preventing the circulation of the seditious and treasonable writings, of the daring and atrocious libels which were constantly published in a multitude of shapes, it would be impossible to answer for the security of the government, and the preservation of the constitution. The country might be armed, and its income expended, but every effort was useless if this intestine ulcer was suffered to prey upon its vitals. No one regretted more than he did the licentiousness of the press, and feeling these sentiments, the noble lord might be assured that he sincerely joined with him in the propriety of making his complaint of the misrepresentation to which he had been subjected. He did not wonder that he should be anxious to disclaim all acquaintance with Mr. O'Connor. It was, indeed, very singular that the noble lord who only knew him eleven years ago, should have been called upon to give evidence at Maidstone in favour of that gentleman. But he believed it was not unfortunate for Mr. O'Connor that such persons as his lordship should have been called in that way. His lordship's evidence was a good evidence for Mr. O'Connor. With regard to the treatment of the state prisoners, it was only within a few days that it had come to his knowledge that any complaint was made upon this subject. It was, however, one which had already been before the public, and was likely to undergo farther discussion, and he was convinced, that whenever it should be completely investigated, it would appear that no unnecessary severity had been exercised either on the part of government, or of the persons to whose care the prisoners had been entrusted. With regard to the bill, he should only repeat, that the causes which formely existed for adopting a similar measure were not yet removed.

Lord *Holland* said, their lordships were informed that the same reasons existed now as were urged when this bill was before the House on a former day; to which he would answer, that the reasons could not be the same, for the situation of the country and of its enemies was very different now from what it was then. To show the truth of this, he should read a passage out of the proclamation of April last: "Whereas it appears that the preparation for the embarkation of troops and warlike stores are now carried on with considerable and increasing activity in the ports of France, Flanders, and Holland, with the avowed design of attempting the invasion of his majesty's dominions; and that in this the enemy is encouraged by the correspondence and communications of traitorous and disaffected persons and societies of these kingdoms." Did ministers mean to assume that it was notorious there were traitorous designs now carrying on in this country, or that the enemy were preparing an invasion, with considerable and increasing activity? He should think it an insult if such a reason was stated. Was the Habeas Corpus act to be suspended for the fourth time, though the reason for its suspension had ceased? Of the importance of that act he had no occasion to say much: there could be no man who did not know that it was to that act he owed his personal freedom. He trusted there was no man so dead to duty as to abandon the bulwark raised by our ancestors for the preservation of the country, without the most imperious necessity. If such necessity did exist, let it be proved; it would be for their lordships to consider whether any such proof had been adduced. And here he must state it as his opinion, that nothing which had taken place for the last four years justified the suspension of an act so valuable to the liberty of the subject. Probably he might be told to night, that there were the same reasons for suspending it, as had ever been considered sufficient. It might be said, the designs of our enemies were manifest; that it was necessary to sacrifice some part of our constitution to preserve the rest. He might be told of the detestable consequences of French principles; that there were men in this country, who had so rooted an aversion to its government and constitution, that nothing would serve them but overturning it. But even admitting all this, he could not consider it as sufficient for suspending the Habeas corpus act. He was, however, ready to declare that there might be circumstances of a peculiar nature to justify its suspension; but he never could allow that the warlike preparations of an enemy, or the disaffection of the people, the natural consequence of a war, were reasons weighty enough to induce parliament to give up so important a privilege into the hands of ministers. He firmly believed the constitution was adequate to its own protection. Who would have supposed, six years ago, that the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act would ever have been demand-

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ed by ministers as a mere matter of course? The existence of a few men dissatisfied with the government, or tainted with what were called Jacobinical principles, was not sufficient to authorize a suspension of this act; neither, if French principles did prevail among any part of the people, was it the way to meet them, to draw a line of distinction which should separate the rich from the poor, and withdraw protection from the one while it was afforded to the other. The House had got so much into the argument of sacrificing a part to preserve the rest, that they seemed to have forgot that there were laws for punishing treason, without suspending the Habeas Corpus act. There was but one state of circumstances he knew of which could justify it, and that was where a conspiracy existed, so artful in its arrangement, wherein the nature, extent, and object of it were so difficult to be developed, that the discharging any one person who had been taken up on suspicion, would necessarily inform all the parties concerned, and give them an opportunity of eluding the justice of the country. But even in that case he would be cautious to whom such power was entrusted. It would be to those who had wisdom to understand the power, and resolution not to abuse it. He would tell them that by putting such a power in their hands it was not intended they should indiscriminately arrest all persons they pleased, those even against whom they had no evidence; but merely, that they were to delay the trials of those against whom they had evidence, but whom it would be imprudent to bring to immediate trial. Unless they fully understood this, no danger however alarming, no conspiracy however extensive, should induce him to suspend the Habeas Corpus act, so long as there were tribunals in the country for the peaceful administration of justice, so long as there remained a semblance of law and government. See whether it was necessary at this period. To prove it was, some documents should have been produced, if for nothing else, at least to have preserved the character of the House, and to have convinced the people they did not wantonly wrest from them what their ancestors had considered necessary for their security. But no one document had been offered; all the materials on which the House could proceed, consisted in the suggestions of ministers as to the state of public affairs. Could their lordships entertain any doubt as to the dispositions of the people of this country, after the events of last year? Would they not allow, that the people at the period to which he alluded, although they were then labouring under burthens unparalleled, had made sacrifices to the utmost extent of their means, certainly beyond the most sanguine expectations, the moment they were apprized of danger? After a people had so exerted themselves, it was insulting their feelings to allow a bill filled with calumnies and libels on them, to pass to its last stage, without an argument to show its necessity. Every one must feel the necessity of confidence between the governors and the governed; but what confidence could exist, if the enthusiasm displayed by the people was met with coldness; if the chearfulness with which they paid taxes, unequal and oppressive as they were, was received with disgust? What could be expected from such treatment? Would they not naturally argue, that those persons were unworthy of the confidence of the people who seemed to have so little regard for theirs?—Thus, then, it appeared, from the comparative state of public affairs, this year and the last, that the reason for suspending the Habeas Corpus act no longer existed, the preamble of the bill no longer applied. Thanks to the rashness of the enemy; thanks to the bravery and skill of British seamen; and, above all, thanks to the victory obtained by lord Nelson; and thanks, no less, to the vigour and activity of the Admiralty, the danger of invasion was not only removed, but wholly destroyed. The plea, therefore, founded on the apprehension of invasion, was at an end, and no other remained but that of the conspiracies of the very people who had so chearfully met the demands of government.—But then followed the argument, that the executive government were the best judges of the necessity, and that the House must know they had not brought forward, nor ever would bring forward, a proposition to suspend the Habeas Corpus act, unless they were convinced of the existence of a conspiracy. With respect to that argument, he wished to know in what chapter of the constitution of this country there was any thing to be found to oblige parliament to believe ministers when they were recommending what was to place additional power in their hands. They might say, it was not their interest to misuse the

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power entrusted to them; but to this he would observe, there were men possessed of a depraved appetite that could bear no restraint; men, whose thirst for power was such, that they cared not how unnecessary any measure of rigour was, provided it tended to increase their power. The constitutional words, jealousy of ministers, should lead the House to withhold confidence, and to refuse to resign power out of their hands, unless where the necessity was fully proved. He could see nothing in the conduct or language of ministers to induce the House to wave that jealousy in their favour. He could look back, and see that those individuals who had been brought to trial under every disadvantage, with the prejudice of ministers against them, had been proved innocent; to the honour of the juries who had tried them, they had conquered every prejudice, and acquitted them. When he considered the result of those trials, he had little hesitation in saying, that far from thinking ministers should be indulged with additional power, there never was a time when it was less necessary. He maintained that the system by which they governed was a system of alarm: they knew they had no way of diverting the people from reflecting on the miseries of the war and their own incapacity but by raising an alarm, that all who opposed the war were Jacobins, and leagued with the French to destroy the country. This was the way in which the government had been supported, and ministers enabled to pass this and bills of a similar tendency; but he believed the juggle would not continue long: he believed the cry of Jacobinism would not long take hold; but that the people of this country would enter into a serious examination of the conduct of ministers. They seemed to him to have overshot their mark. They had rung the alarm bell so long in the people's ears, that it would no longer awaken them. Neither the failure of the object of the war, or the distresses of the people, had prevented them from evincing a line of conduct last year, when the country was threatened, that reflected the highest degree of honour on themselves. The ungenerous treatment they had received from ministers in return astonished him. So far from recanting their former assertion of disaffection among the people, they had obliquely added to them, and now continued to load them with calumnies which they knew were not deserved. He trusted the people would, to the satisfaction of Europe and of posterity, contradict those calumnies; and he trusted also, that their actions would soon contradict another calumny, namely, that of their being intended by administration to assist their views against themselves, and through the medium of alarm to become a party supporting the attacks of ministers against their own liberty, freedom, and independence.

Lord *Grenville* said, that if the debate on this bill had depended on the merits of the individuals who compose the present administration, he should certainly have no hope, perhaps no ambition, to convince the noble lord of the propriety of any part of the measure—indeed, it would, perhaps, be difficult to persuade that noble lord of the propriety of any measure of his majesty's ministers. He had acted uniformly, as if he thought them wrong in every thing; but although ministers had not the approbation of that noble lord, they had repeatedly received the support of a considerable part of the House. As to the trial of the persons who were acquitted at the Old Bailey, he thought the point had been given up, and that it was never to be insisted upon again that the acquittal of these persons invalidated the reports of the two Houses of parliament relative to the existence of a conspiracy against the government of this country. Were we to be told, after all that had happened, that the acquittal, the honourable acquittal, of persons indicted for high treason, was a proof of entire innocence? Were we now to learn that it was impossible for any man to be acquitted, and afterwards prove to be guilty of high treason? So far was the event of these trials from negativing the assertion of the reports of the existence of a conspiracy, that it tended to confirm it. —But, it seemed, there was no evidence of any conspiracy. Did the noble lord ever hear that there existed a certain society called the Corresponding Society? The object of that society was, under the mask of parliamentary reform, to pull down the government, and to introduce a new system of things in this country on the model of the French government. These things were proved at the trials at the Old Bailey, to which the noble lord had alluded, and in which acquittals he had triumphed so much. They were so well understood to be proved, even by the counsel for Hardy, that the best defence

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the learned gentlemen could make for their client was, that no man could be ignorant of the facts, but that the prisoner was a poor, harmless, simple, inoffensive man, and that if any mischief was intended by any body, he was not in the least aware of it; and the acquittal of the others turned very much on the acquittal of the first; but nobody ever thought of doubting the views entertained by some members of this society.—The noble lord had asked, on what evidence ministers maintained the necessity of this bill? He would refer the noble lord to the proclamation in April last, which stated that our enemies were aided and abetted by persons in this country, &c. The evidence was last year deemed so satisfactory, that the bill then passed unanimously. But had not the fact turned out as ministers had foretold it? Was it not confirmed in the case of a person who was acquitted, honourably acquitted, at Maidstone? The House need not be told he alluded to the case of O'Connor. Had not that traitor, since his trial and honourable acquittal, thrown himself upon the mercy of that gracious sovereign whom he had conspired with other traitors to dethrone? Had he not afterwards, to obtain that mercy, detailed upon his oath circumstances which were afterwards confirmed by a rebellion? But was that all? Had not O'Coigly been convicted of treason upon the evidence of a paper, by which it appeared that a communication was to be made to the French Directory, not from any society in Ireland, but from a society in England? Was not that paper the evidence on which the jury convicted that traitor? All these things he stated to show, that the assertion of there having been a conspiracy in this country was not lightly made. What was the case at the present moment? That a treasonable conspiracy had existed in Ireland ever since the year 1791, was proved by the reports of both houses of parliament in that country. By this it was manifest that the design had been long conceived of separating Ireland from this country. This was planned by a society. The very object of that society was to put forward parliamentary reform as a cloak to the real design, but not to show that design until they thought some impression was made on the minds of the people. The mask was afterwards partly thrown off, for instead of a reform in parliament, they talked of a free parliament. Nor was this plan the less detestable on account of religion being made use of as a cloak to cover its iniquity. This plan was followed up also in England. Did any man believe that the real design of the meeting at Chalk Farm was to reconcile the people of England to a constitutional parliamentary reform? This country contained a number of disaffected men; and it had been made the depot of the treasonable endeavours of many who were concerned in the Irish rebellion. As to the idea that the people of England would conceive themselves calumniated by this bill, he did not apprehend any such thing, any more than they would think they were called murderers, because a law was made against murder. If he thought the discontent of the people of England against government was general, he should not propose this measure, because, in such a case, little could be done by the imprisonment of a few. But he was persuaded the people would view this as a bill, not for the destruction of their liberties, but for the continuance and protection of them.

The House divided: Contents, 26; Not-Contents, 1. The bill was then passed.

Lord Holland's Protest against passing the Habeas Corpus Suspension Bill.] The following Protest was entered on the Journals:

"DISSENTIENT,

1. "Because the existence of a conspiracy, of an extent so formidable, and of a nature so complicated, that the public disclosures of the evidence necessary to the conviction of one conspirator might enable his accomplices to ascertain the information of government, and to elude the justice of the country, can alone constitute a necessity sufficient to justify a Peer of parliament in assenting to any suspension of the Habeas Corpus.

2. "Because no measures have been taken to make such necessity apparent.

3. "Because if, from private information, or from the general circumstances of the country, the House were convinced that such necessity did actually exist, it would, nevertheless, be more consonant with the usages, and less derogatory to the dignity of parliament, to produce substantial documents, rather than the suggestions of ministers, or the vague suspicions of individuals in justification of so extraordinary a measure.

4. "Because the alarms of ministers are always to be received with mistrust by

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the legislature, when the remedy proposed is an extension of their power, and a diminution of the liberty of the subject.

5. "Because these principles of jealousy, applicable to all times, appear to me to be peculiarly so to the present, when a system of government by alarm has been resorted to year after year, and powers similar to those required by this bill been obtained on the score of allegations which subsequent events have refuted; a memorable example of which occurred in the years 1794 and 1795, when a number of persons detained under the provisions of a bill similar to this, were all either liberated without trial, or acquitted by a verdict of their country.

6. "Because the danger of an invasion (the pretence for suspending the Habeas Corpus last session) exists no longer. And it is subversive of that mutual confidence which would subsist between the government and governed, to requite with distrust in their dispositions, and a continual suspension of one of the most essential safeguards of their liberty, the affections of the people manifested in their late exertions at the moment of alarm, and in the cheerfulness with which they have submitted to burthens unparalleled in their pressure, and now confessedly unequal in their operation."

(Signed) "HOLLAND."

Debate in the Lords on the Income Duty Bill.] Jan. 8. On the order of the day for the third reading of the Income Duty bill,

The Earl of *Suffolk* said:—No man, my lords, is more willing than I am, to submit to an equal and equitable tax upon income; but the present measure is neither equal nor equitable; and if carried into effect, will be productive of consequences mischievous to the country at large. The bill will be peculiarly oppressive on the gentlemen of landed property; so much so, indeed, that the land will never be able to bear it. This tax is calculated to affix no more than a tenth upon income; but it will, in fact, amount to nearly twenty per cent. It is said that this tax is only ten per cent upon my income; but, I beg leave to remind your lordships, that last session a tax upon salt took place, which, in Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, and other counties, upon what is called the dairy farms in particular, will, in its operation, be equal to 4 per cent. I am within bounds when I state the poor-rates at three per cent. This added to the other makes 17 per cent. When we cast our eye to the necessary expenses of bailiffs, stewards, and other numerous incidentals to landed property, we cannot reasonably place less than five per cent to that account, which makes the whole nearly 20 per cent. I have, in the course of the last few years, expended in improvements more than 15,000*l.*; in doing which I have of course submitted to the privation of a great many of those comforts which persons of my rank in life may fairly be allowed to be indulged in. It must be evident, that I have not done this for my own personal gratification. No, my lords; I was induced to such a line of conduct, in order that I might transmit to my son an estate as independent as the principles which I have endeavoured to instil into his mind, and which might always prove the means of enabling him to act up to them. Many other noble lords, I dare say there are, who have acted upon the same system with myself. I now call upon such noble lords, and caution them to beware how they give their sanction to a measure which falls so peculiarly heavy and oppressive on the landed interest in particular. Very different indeed is the situation of the noble lords upon the cross bench, and other parts of the House, whose situations bring them in very large emoluments, which they no doubt well deserve, for the high, important, and arduous stations they fill in the administration of the government of the country. Those noble lords, however, have only to pay their ten per cent out of the seven, eight, or ten thousand a year, which they receive. They have no salt duties, amounting to 4 per cent, no poor-rates, bailiffs, stewards, broken farmers, and other unavoidable incidentals of that nature to affect them. They have beside a rich field of patronage open to them, wherewith to gratify the blooming hopes, and rising ambition of their younger sons and nearest relatives, in the extensive and lucrative branches of the navy, the army, and the church. These are circumstances which may make noble lords look lightly on a tax of ten per cent upon income; but when it falls in so oppressive a manner upon land, it becomes very hard indeed to those who have only their land, and what they can save from it, to support the younger branches of their several families. For my own part, my lords, I have ever prided myself in the independence of my

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principles. I never was, nor am ever likely to be connected with any party, or head of a party; and when my second son some time ago expressed a wish to go into the army, I strenuously advised him against it, though I have ever entertained the highest respest for it: But I well knew, and endeavoured to convince him of it, that he might remain for years a subaltern, if he had not ministerial interest, or money sufficient to purchase the necessary steps of preferment. He has, therefore, embraced a profession, in which, if he has talents, he will be able by them to acquire both honour and emoluments.

The Earl of *Liverpool* said, that many of the peculiar expenses attached to land were allowed to be deducted previous to the operation of the bill taking effect. The noble earl had laid much stress upon the effects of the additional salt duties. They certainly bore with additional weight on those parts of the country where cheese was manufactured; but was it not notorious that the maker repaid himself by the advanced price of his cheese? A similar argument would apply in other cases where the produce of land became peculiarly liable to the effect of taxation.

Lord *Holland* said, that the supporters of the measure had attempted to establish two different propositions: first, that the abstract principle of the bill was the first point to be discussed in that House; and next, that this principle had been admitted by the triple assessment of last year. This doctrine of admission of principles *in limine*, without examination of the practicability or expediency of the measure, upon which the justness or fallacy of such principle must depend, seemed to him a kind of parliamentary jargon, which if it was not introduced with the design, had, at least, answered the purpose of keeping the real merit of the question out of sight. What was the meaning of the abstract principle of a tax bill? He could see no advantage in deciding on the propriety of a nation raising her supplies within the year, without any circumstances given to judge of the expediency of such a measure, without any mode proposed, or materials granted for forming an opinion of the practicability of such a project. At best, it was a speculation for the political economist; it could not be part of the duty of a member of the legislature. The principle could only be admitted, from a conviction of its expediency and practicability; the practicability could only be ascertained by an examination of the modes proposed for carrying it into execution, and the expediency only established by a comparison of the advantages and disadvantages likely to result from its adoption. If, upon an examination of the advantages and disadvantages likely to accrue, the latter were found to prevail, the bill ought to be rejected without any regard to its principle. It did not, however, appear, that what had been done last year was an admission of the principle. It was true an experiment had been tried, but it had completely failed: but supposing the legislature had admitted the principle, he hoped they were at liberty to change their opinions on that subject as their lordships might have occasion to observe in the course of that debate, that persons of great financial knowledge might have very different notions, at different times, on subjects like the present.

He should now proceed to the consideration of the advantages and disadvantages which this scheme for raising ten millions within the year presented. He had no hesitation in saying that the disadvantages were so numerous and so palpable, that it appeared to him there could be no doubt as to the decision which their lordships ought to make, which was, to give it their negative. The arguments in favour of the measure, had been reduced to three. First, that it prevented all idea of delusion with regard to our situation, and made the people understand, at once, the nature and extent of the burthen they had to bear. Second, that the country saved, by raising the money at once instead of raising it by loans, the interest, whatever it was. The third reason was, that this proceeding was calculated to intimidate the enemy, who had placed their hope of our destruction on the increase of our debt.

With regard to the first of these arguments, the principle upon which it was founded met his sincerest approbation. He should be very happy to see any measure adopted to prevent the delusion of the people, but he must say, that if he were asked what was the greatest delusion that had marked the career of these delusive ministers, he should state it to be the measure which was now under discussion. For certain reasons, whether right or wrong, ministers had procured the repeal of the Assessed-tax act, passed last session; and from the preamble of the present

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bill, it should seem that this measure was intended as a substitute. The assessed taxes were intended to raise a certain sum for last year, and were pledged to the payment of eight millions raised by loan. Those eight millions were to be paid this year by that bill—but this substitute for that bill did not pretend to pay them this year, but deferred the payment of them, together with ten millions raised this year, till the end of the war. In passing this act, their lordships ought not only to consider, whether it was practicable at the present moment, but whether its continuance all the time necessary for its operations would be practicable: at present there were eight millions, for which the payment of the assessed taxes was to have been applied. There were also ten millions to be raised by the present bill; so that the total amount was 18 millions, to be redeemed by the operation of this bill after the conclusion of peace. Now the people might be led to conceive, that these 18 millions would be paid off in, at least, two years after the termination of the war. It was however easy to show that this could not be the case. If ten millions were funded in the three per cents during the war, and the price of stocks had been 50, it was evident, that the sum to be raised must increase in proportion as the stocks rose; for to redeem these ten millions, were the stocks at par, twenty millions would be necessary: the most sanguine calculator for peace could not assign less than two years for the continuance of the war; and if, during that time, ten millions was continued to be raised within the year, and ten millions by way of loan, it would be necessary that this tax should last five years after a peace. Now he would submit it to the consideration of their lordships, whether they thought it possible that the people of this country were able to pay one tenth of their income for the space of seven or eight years? He would recall to their attention the sum which was raised last year. He believed it amounted to about 33 millions. Now, the taxable income of the country had been estimated at 110 millions. It therefore appeared, that the people of this country had already paid, independently of the tax which was now proposed, one-third of their income to government. Did their lordships imagine that the people could continue to do this long without being obliged to resort to their capital? And if they were once to draw upon their capital it needed no argument from him to show how fatal the effects of this tax would prove to the country. With regard to what he had said as to the payment of the debt, some of their lordships would, perhaps, answer that argument by saying, that it would be easily paid off, if the funds should continue at their present price; but he believed this would not be much urged, as it was evident that the country would be in a wretched situation indeed if the funds did not rise upon a peace; and even in that supposition, at the end of two years, parliament was pledged to pay off the loyalty loan at the choice of the holders: and were the stocks low, the holders would certainly call upon them. He should illustrate his own sentiments on this subject by referring to a book which was ascribed to a noble lord (Auckland). The author, in putting the supposition of one-thirteenth of the income of the country being to be raised, either voluntarily or by force, laid it down as a maxim, that such a tax could not take place without diminishing the capital of the country, which would prove very injurious to trade and agriculture—the superior ranks, he observed, would retrench their expenses, which would cause a defalcation in the revenue, which must either be made up by taking from the sinking fund, or by fresh taxes.

He came now to consider the second advantage that was alleged to belong to the proposed tax. It was said that the nation would save in consequence of having no interest to pay upon the money which was raised for the public expenditure. It appeared to him, that when money was raised by loan, it was the capital and not the interest, which was lost. It made, in his opinion, no essential difference, whether interest was paid or not (to the wealth of the nation, though much in a political point of view), as the great loss arose from the capital being taken from productive, and squandered in unproductive labour. But if borrowing was expedient for the government, it was equally so for private persons; and this argument would apply in the present case; for nothing could be said to show the difficulties of the government in raising money, which might not be urged with regard to individuals. A noble lord had stated, that it was nothing more than taking the money out of one pocket and putting it into another. But let it be supposed, that a great

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part of the savings which might enable people to pay the present tax should be taken from consumption, what then would be the result? A reduction of the revenue must be expected to follow a diminution of consumption. But if they should pay the tax out of their capital, the evil would still be greater, as that would prove reduction of the real strength of the country. It certainly was the operation of many taxes to take money out of one pocket, and put it into another; and if this effect was to be ascribed to the present, it was not unworthy of their lordships attention to consider from whose pockets it was to be taken, and into whose pockets it was to be put. Could their lordships look coolly forward to the prospect of their posterity becoming titled beggars? Their property was easily known, and they could not if they were inclined, evade the tax. Now, if it was true that this measure transported money from one pocket to another, it was evident that its object was, to take from those that had wealth, and to give to those that had none. Nothing, however, was more clear, than that the tax, the tendency of which was to shift property, by impoverishing the members of that House, would tend also to render them still more and more dependent on the crown; and if their lordships inherited the public spirit of their ancestors, they would not hesitate a moment in rejecting the bill on that score. As this measure must continue for many years, the whole weight of the tax must fall on those who should not be able to escape—in fact on land-owners; or as the noble lord, whose book he had quoted, expressed it, "on those who had ostensible possessions."

Among the many other disadvantages of the present tax was that of its inequality. It had been justly observed, that in taxation, as well as every thing else, it was impossible to reach perfection; but the inequalities of this measure would be much more severely felt than those of any other tax, as it was more extensive. Inequalities in smaller taxes fell generally upon some particular branch of trade, from which it would often be contrived to shift the burthen, at least a part of it; but the case was very different in the inequalities of a tax which affected the whole income of the country. For his part, if he thought it necessary to raise ten millions by direct taxation, he should be of opinion that the sum had better be raised by ten different taxes than by one. It was true, indeed, that this mode of collection would prove expensive; but if this was a disadvantage, which could not be avoided, it might be compensated by other advantages. The inequalities of each tax, in such a case, would fall on persons of different descriptions, and on none, therefore, very heavily; so that it might produce a sort of irregular equality. But not so with a great tax. The slightest inequality then, was sufficient to ruin whole classes and descriptions of people; and as it must all fall on a certain description of persons, must be more heavy in its operation, and more ruinous in its consequences. The evident tendency of this was, to sweep away all the middle classes, and to annihilate the most valuable part of society. The injustice of the scheme was particularly striking in its making no distinction as to the different kinds of income which fell under its operation. He could not see upon what principle it was that a gradation should be made from 60*l.* up to 200*l.*, and that after the latter sum there should be no increase whatever, but that one-tenth should be alike taken from the man of 200*l.* and the man of 5,000*l.* a year. This was another proof that it was the tendency of the tax to annihilate the middle classes. He was afraid that it would give too great an opportunity to the circulation of those calumnies which often represented some of their lordships to act from the worst of motives. It might, perhaps, be said, that the lower and higher classes were sheltered from the tax, and thus a compromise was made with him to crush the middle. He heard it whispered, why do not the persons of the latter class petition against the bill? He was afraid that this circumstance might be easily accounted for, but by a consideration which was truly melancholy. There were comparatively few, he believed in that situation of life, but had some dependence, either directly or indirectly, on the minister: it was therefore, not to be wondered at that scarce any public meetings had been held in opposition to the bill.

On the third argument in favour of the tax, much need not be said. He was far from thinking that the measure would have the effect upon the enemy which was expected from it: on the contrary, persevering in the funding system was much more likely to give them a great idea of our resources, because that sys-

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tem was not understood upon the continent. Their ignorance of its nature made persons abroad magnify its effects, and they were inclined to consider it an inexhaustible source to which the British government could always with confidence resort. It was, therefore, far from being good policy to declare to the world, that we had at last arrived at the end of the funding system.—There was one objection which had been urged with much force against the bill in another place: he meant the evil arising from the disclosure of property. The book from which he had read so much, considered this as one of the greatest difficulties that would attend the carrying a tax upon income into effect. In this country there was certainly a very great reluctance to any measure that should lay open the situation of individuals; and in enforcing this their lordships ought to recollect that they had not only the interests but the prejudices of the people to combat. He was not now arguing whether this general desire of concealment was right or wrong; it was sufficient for him that it existed. It was the business of a wise legislature to consult the prejudices as well as the interests of a nation, and to be as careful that the former should not be violated, as that the latter should not be injured. The disclosure of property was particularly dreaded by persons in trade, and some provisions had been made in their favour; but it was obvious that it might also prove very injurious to many other descriptions of persons. It might happen that a father should be very unwilling to have the state of his affairs made known to his son, lest the knowledge of the wealth he was to inherit might damp the efforts of the youth in the pursuits he might wish him to engage, and make him neglect to exercise his talents. It might also be very injurious to other men, that their circumstances should be completely disclosed to persons on whom they have a dependence. And it ought not to be overlooked, that in order to procure this disclosure of income, the horrid system of multiplying oaths was resorted to, in consequence of which that sacred bond upon which life and property depends, must become daily more and more loosened. At the same time, son was set against father, and father against son. Nay, it even went so far as to bring forward, in spite of the uniform maxims of our law on that subject, the wife against her husband, as would be seen upon referring to the 41st clause in the act. Thus it appeared that every social tie was diregarded.

Could he get over these objections—could he be brought to concur in these preliminary injustices, he should, at least, say, let the arbitrary disclosure of property, and the imprudent mutiplication of oaths lead to an equal tax. The difficulty and cruelty of ascertaining the real value of a man's property instead of his income, would not be so great as the comparative advantage and equality of the tax upon all property. Much, in point of profit and quality, might be gained, and little lost, in point of justice and principle. Now nothing could be more unjust than the present scheme; according to which, the man whose property and income were as sixty to sixteen, paid the same as he whose property and income were as sixteen to sixty: yet their lordships had heard this praised as an equal mode of taxation. Indeed, the inequalities of the tax were so glaring and so obvious, that it was almost unnecessary to say a word upon that part of the subject. It was ridiculous that persons whose income was permanent, and descended to their heirs, should pay no more than those whose income arose from a profession or an annuity. As the tax applied to funded property after a dividend should be drawn, it was evidently a tax upon the stocks, and of course a violation of faith with the public creditor. It would certainly bear hard upon the funds in another way, and tend to lower them considerably. The reason of this was evident. The public funds were that description of personal property which was the least capable of being concealed; persons, therefore, who were anxious to evade this tax would sell out of the funds, and lay out their money in some other way. This was an effect that might very naturally be expected to take place. It was a silly argument to say, that the tax was not to extend to the funds, because the tenth of the dividend was not withheld in the payment, but only taken away when paid. This was like the story of the Golden Farmer. The man was allowed to have the money in his pocket, but was afterwards followed and knocked down for it. It reminded him of a transaction of the French government, which he knew to be true. Upon the conclusion of the treaty with Spain in 1794, it was stipulated by France, that all the Portuguese prisoners taken in the Spanish service

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should be returned to Spain. France fulfilled this article of the treaty, by sending the Portuguese prisoners to Barcelona; but on their voyage from thence to Lisbon, they were captured by a French ship of war. The prisoners remonstrated against being carried back to France, and stated that they had just been set at liberty by the French government. Their remonstrance, however, was answered with this observation—"We released you as Spanish allies; we now retake you as Portuguese." This story might serve hereafter to illustrate the faith of government with respect to the funds. If he had no other objection to the bill than this violation of a public engagement, that alone would be a sufficient reason with him to oppose it.

Lord *Auckland* said:—My lords; The speech of the noble baron would have compelled me, in justice to myself, to solicit your attention for a few minutes, even if I had not already intended to submit some observations on the measure now before us. The noble earl who spoke first in the debate reminded me of his having expressed, in a former session, his wish, that the expense of every war might be principally sustained, during such war, by a fair and equal tax. I perfectly recollect the fact. And the noble earl admits, with becoming candour, that he is not adverse to the present bill: he is only dissatisfied with some of its provisions, the purport of which (I say it with all due deference) appears to me to be much misconceived by him. The bill has not received, nor can I learn that it is likely to receive, opposition or objection from any other quarter. I accordingly feel myself warranted in asserting that, with the exception of the noble baron's solitary negative, the measure in question has the concurrence of the House. And I firmly believe it to have, nearly in a similar proportion, the general assent of the kingdom.

But the noble baron has been pleased to insinuate, that I cannot give my individual concurrence, as a peer of parliament, "without an inconsistency of reasoning and a change of system." I feel it incumbent on me, my lords, to repel such an insinuation, if it were meant to imply any versatility or dereliction of principle. The noble lord has done me the honour to select and read certain passages from a small work which was published by me in the year 1779.* I might admit the full construction given by the noble lord to those passages, and might answer, that, in the lapse of time, many speculative opinions (and personal opinions also) are liable fairly and honourably to be varied by events, by change of circumstances, by better information, and by more mature judgment. And surely, after an interval of twenty most eventful years, an opinion, of the kind alluded to, might be changed or abandoned without any cause of self-reproach. In the course of the next twenty years it may happen to the noble lord (and I trust and hope, without implying any disrespect, that it will happen) to change some of his political opinions with much self-satisfaction, and with benefit to his country. If, however, the noble lord had adverted with his usual accuracy to the context of the passages which he thought proper to cite, he would have found that they related to a voluntary contribution to be dependant on the enthusiasm of the contributors; or if to a forced and general contribution, then to be dependant on a mere voluntary disclosure of income. At the period of which I speak, it never entered into the minds of the most enlightened statesmen (and I appeal to a noble and learned friend, the lord chancellor, who now hears me, and was conversant in the discussions to which I refer) that it could be practicable to establish a forced and general contribution on the only just and efficient system of a forced disclosure. But I am not solicitous to avail myself of this explanation, even if I have been so fortunate as to satisfy your lordships that it is solid and sufficient. I now freely confess, that in 1779 I did not foresee either the enthusiasm, or the prosperity and resources, which distinguish the actual epoch of our history above all others; and which have given to our countrymen both the disposition and ability to adopt the present measure, without any probable inconvenience sufficient to counterbalance the advantages to be obtained.

Your lordships will permit me here to make one farther remark; and several of you can bear testimony to its truth. Whatever my opinion may be, it is not formed suddenly and for the purposes of the present day. It is an opinion which I publicly avowed and made known in the last session of parliament. It then happened to me, and to others, in discussing the plan of the additional assessments, to state and admit its inequalities and imperfections (for they are not new discoveries).

* Letters to the Earl of Carlisle from William Eden, esq.

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And we repeatedly added a wish for a measure somewhat similar to the bill now before us. I well remember to have described it as the grand desideratum in finance. But we at the same time expressed our fears that such a measure would be found impracticable. It now appears that the difficulties, which we feared, were not insurmountable. The successful attempt to surmount them was well worthy of that great and energetic mind which directs our councils. It was well worthy of that mind, which seems to have been created, by a beneficent Providence, for the preservation of this kingdom—for the preservation of an adjoining kingdom, whose permanent prosperity nnd security (in despite of her ill-judged jealousies) we cordially seek to equalize with our own prosperity and security; and, perhaps, also for the restoration of Europe. Nothing inferior to the force of such a mind could have accomplished a project, which, in its actual effect and probable cnnsequences, is of a nature so gigantic, that it is well calculated to rank with the other events of 1798. I annex no epithet to those events, for no language can do justice to their glory, or to their importance.

But if the adoption of this measure will be really so advantageous to the public, is it not (says one of the noble lords) an admission that the system, which you have so long pursued, was wrong? Is it not an implied censure on that system? In other words, if the new system is so clearly the best, why was it not sooner brought forward? Perhaps it might be a sufficient answer, that till the funds began to be depressed by the accumulated weight of new loans, the expediency of raising a considerable part of the supply within the year was less evident and less urgent. But there was another reason, paramount to all reasons. It was impossible at an earlier period, to procure the adoption of the large and salutary plan now offered to us. Our countrymen in general have been well and wisely disposed, during the whole of the tremendous struggle in which we are engaged, from its commencement to the present hour. Still, however, there were many, too many, among us, to whom the progress of the French revolution, and the events of the war, had not yet developed the infernal views and tendency of Jacobinism, or the principles and practices of those, who, both secretly and openly, were supporting its cause.

It must be remembered that, in the first explosion of those crimes and calamities, which have since brought desolation on many nations, and extreme danger upon all, there were men (and Englishmen too) of leading and enlightened talents, who believed or affected to believe, and who persuaded themselves and others, that the French revolution was the most glorious fabric of human integrity and wisdom; that it was the victory of eternal truth over prejudices; and that the atrocious acts of the revolutionists were only the first excesses and transient ebullitions of a new liberty, calculated to become the epoch and consummation of human happiness. The wretched delusion extended itself, and prevailed with much force, and with many perilous consequences, to the period of the Lisle negotiation: and even then, a great part of the nation was disposed to abandon the whole continent of Europe to subjugation and destruction, and to make other ruinous sacrifices, in order to purchase a nominal peace, more fatal than any war.

When I look back to that period, I have all the painful sensations of a feverish and frightful dream. Almighty God was pleased, for our preservation, to destroy our short-sighted hopes. The Lisle conferences were broken off in a manner which removed the film from the eyes of many. France avowed the inveterate design to destroy and extirpate the British empire! She proclaimed her design with ostentation, and made the most extravagant preparations to execute it. Every doubt now ceased, and it became most manifest, that a steady and vigorous prosecution of the war was indispensable to our existence as an independent people. In a crisis, so awfully interesting, the whole spirit and good sense of the nation burst forth. The militia, the yeomanry, the army, the navy, were all animated by the same zeal, and vied with each other in activity, promptitude, discipline and bravery. The same enthusiasm warmed the heart of every Englishman in every part of the globe. The wisdom of parliament went hand in hand with the right disposition of the people; and towards the close of 1797, brought forward the measure of the additional assessed taxes, which was accompanied by a voluntary contribution, promoted by all ranks with a generosity unexampled, and amounting at this hour to a sum little short of two millions sterling. Those exertions, which laid the foundation of the great system

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now under discussion, were farther aided by a war tax (the convoy tax) on our imports and exports. And here I must digress for a moment to remark, that the amount of those imports and exports, by a most happy peculiarity in the seventh year of a war, was in 1798, so far as the accounts are completed, greater than ever.

It was seen and acknowledged, that the measure of the additional assessments bore unequally, and that its inequalities affected those who came forward with public spirit, and who were incapable of evasions; at the same time, that the comparative means of others, in many cases, evaded a fair contribution, and in many more were exempted from all charge. The measure nevertheless went forward, and with all its imperfections was of such evident utility, as to excite a general wish to improve and extend it. It was highly encouraging to that extension to have observed, in the progress of the experiment, that the defalcations made from the incomes or capitals of individuals, had not occasioned any distress or embarrassment. On the contrary, there has been a general and progressive increase in the prosperity of the kingdom. Your lordships will find ample proofs of this assertion in the comparative statements of our trade; in the favourable course of exchange with the continent; in the nett produce of the permanent revenue, which for the year ending the 5th of January 1798, was 17,960,000*l.* and for the year ending January 5, 1799, 21,049,000*l.*: but more especially in the nett produce of the permanent taxes which existed antecedent to the war. That produce for the year ending the 5th of this month was 1,070,000*l.* higher than in the preceding year:—2,021,000*l.* higher than what I once stated in this House to have been the average produce of the three years ending the 5th of January 1796: and 118,000*l.* higher than in the most productive year of peace, I mean the year ending the 5th of January 1793. In mentioning the exports, I ought to have remarked that the value of British manufactures, exported in 1798, so far as can be inferred from the amount of the three quarters ending the 10th of October, was considerably greater than ever. All these evidences of prosperity are now much stronger than the statements and estimates which I submitted to your lordships in May 1796. And yet those estimates were at the time attacked, and disputed, and opposed, as fanciful and extravagant; not indeed with much success, but certainly with much vehemence, both in speeches and publications. I may now be permitted to reply, with a reasonable exultation, that our actual prosperity (independently of the incalculable advantages to be derived from our late victories and from the opening of new sources of commerce) far exceeds what I ventured, in 1796, to promise, or even to think probable.

The war supply, thus established, has been paid without a murmur. It has been accompanied by the astonishing successes, by which the year 1798 will be rendered ever memorable in history. Nor will the impression, estimation, and value, of those successes, be diminished by the assertion of the noble baron, that "Two hundred millions have been squandered without attaining any permanent advantage." That assertion, my lords, provokes me to request your attention for a moment to the singular contrast exhibited by the enemy. Bankrupt in finance; ruined in manufactures; deprived of all commerce; baffled in all project of invasion; disgraced and defeated in every attempt to injure this country, which has been the peculiar object of hostility; groaning under the loss of large fleets and large armies; struggling against the hatred, and horror, and despair, of enslaved nations; and exposed to new hostilities from other states at last sensible of the general danger; France nevertheless continues to pursue her wild and wicked career! cheating one ally, extorting money from a second, and plundering a third, in order to collect means to invade a fourth, without provocation or pretext; fomenting and purchasing rebellions and revolutions; carrying or threatening devastation indiscriminately to republics and to monarchies; she still continues to set at defiance all the principles and duties of religion, and all the laws of nature and of nations. And this extremity of persevering wickedness is blended with a presumptuous rashness, and with a cold and calculating cruelty, beyond any example at which we have shuddered in the most degrading records of human depravity.

It is not easy in private life for the bravest man to defend himself against a mad and desperate ruffian. There is something analogous in the struggles between nations. Nor can there be a doubt that this country would have fallen, and would have involved in her ruin all the

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other existing governments, if our countrymen had not been awakened to a timely sense of their danger, and if they had not been animated by a well-founded confidence in their own resources, and by a wise and characteristic courage. We feel and know that our only road to peace and security is by resistance and energy. We are driven, and we universally acknowledge that we are driven to provide for another year, with the same vigour to which we owe our present safety and prosperity, and the unparalleled glory with which they are accompanied. Happily we have means and resources still adequate to the trial; and it only remains to be considered, whether those resources can be brought into activity and effect better than by the measure now before us.

What then, my lords, are the nature and objects of this measure? Its leading principle, as in the measure of the last year, is, to raise a considerable portion of the supplies of the year within the year; and to liquidate, within a short time, what may be farther raised by loan. The sum raised last year, by the different modes of what may be called a war supply, will probably amount to about seven millions and a half. The sum estimated to be raised towards the service of the present year, by this bill, and by the war tax on imports and exports, is about twelve millions. With these views, it is proposed to tax in equal proportions, all the descriptions and classes of income, except those only which belong to the poor and labouring part of the community; and also except that small amount of income which may be presumed to furnish a mere subsistence. The sum expected to be thus raised has been stated at ten millions, being the tenth of the calculated amount of that part of the national income, which is made liable to the proposed contribution. I have reason to believe, that this calculation is moderate, and that by a commendable caution it is given below the truth. I farther incline to think, that the general income of the class exempted from all contribution might be shown to be, at least, as great as that part of the national income on which this bill will operate.

The plan has been introduced, framed, and completed, with every modification and indulgence compatible with its principle. Large allowances have been made to families and to individuals, in proportion to the number of their children, and by a scale highly favourable to incomes not exceeding 1,000*l.* upon the principle, that the expense of maintaining and educating children bears proportionably more heavily on small incomes than it does on larger incomes. The rules for estimating the incomes of farmers, and lessees of land, and more especially of farmers under 300*l.* a year, have also been stated with most liberal modifications and abatements. And there appear in the bill many other indulgences, proceeding certainly from just and wise motives, but tending to diminish the estimated produce. Still, however, when we recollect that the additional assessments, with the voluntary contributions, are producing above six millions, it is not unreasonable to presume, that the measure now in question may produce ten millions.

The measure of the last session, by the nature of its operation, forced upon some only (and in that, as well as in other respects, it was partial) the necessity of declaring their incomes. The present measure requires from all, the statement of an income, not inferior to the income actually possessed and enjoyed; allowing, however, a veil of secrecy to be thrown over such statements in every case where the publication may be thought by the individual to be contrary to his commercial interests, it will result from these provisions, that the hoarders of income must now pay their full proportion for the protection which they enjoy. Nor will it any longer happen that the conscientious contributor will pay his quota, or more than his quota, whilst the cold hearted and the fraudulent, with equal or greater means, pay little or nothing. In these respects, the system is now as just towards individuals as it will be found to be expedient with regard to the public. Keeping these several objects in view, the present bill appears to me to have been anxiously calculated, and ably and accurately framed to prevent inequality, fraud, embarrassment, and injury. And thus it is, my lords, that we are accomplishing the best operation of finance, the practicability of obtaining, by a national effort, to be made for a time only, without national inconvenience, any supply that the national exigencies may require. That in a measure so extensive, unforeseen cases may occur, which may hereafter call for parliamentary interference, relief, or explanation is probable, and more than probable. Undoubtedly many such cases may, and will

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occur. On the other hand, occasions may arise in which it will be necessary to apply strict and more effectual provisions, to obviate unforeseen evasions and frauds.

I shall now, my lords, take a summary view of the principle advantages to be derived from the vote which, I trust, we are about to give. Some of those advantages were entirely overlooked by the noble baron, and others seem to me to have been under-rated by him. The consideration which first presents itself is that of economy. I will not fatigue your lordships with minute calculations. But in comparing the prompt levy and payment of twenty millions, with the value of the annuity which must have been created, if parliament had borrowed the same sum by loan, I am moderate in assuming, that such a loan could not have been obtained at a better price than 50*l.* for the 3 per cent, or at an interest of 6 per cent, which with the provision of 2 per cent towards the redemption of the capital so created, would have amounted to a charge of 6 per cent, or 1,600,000*l.*

And here let me remark incidentally, that 1,600,000*l.* a year must have been imposed in new and permanent taxes; to which might be added, the great expense of collecting. These considerations must not be overlooked in comparing the 10 per cent upon income payable only for two years, to produce the amount of the sum stated. The 1,600,000*l.* a year so created for the interest and gradual extinction of the twenty millions so borrowed, or, in other words, for the extinction of forty millions capital 3 per cents, may be estimated to extinguish the whole, at the probable average price of the funds, in about forty years. What, then, is the present value of such an annuity for forty years? Your lordships will find it to be about twenty years purchase, taking the average interest of money at 4 per cent. And certainly, though, from the experience of this century, there have been wars during nearly sixteen years in every forty years, 4 per cent may now be considered, under the actual prosperity and prospects of this country, as a fair average interest. The result then will be, that instead of creating an annuity in taxes bearing heavily on the people in general, the value of which would be thirty-two millions, you raise twenty millions in two years, and gain the difference.

But the farther resulting advantages are infinitely more important. It is not among the least of those advantages, that by the present plan, the salutary effects of the sinking fund are greatly accelerated. The sums of different descriptions to be reserved, and applied by the commissioners for the redemption of the national debt, will, in the first year of peace, be not less than fifteen millions or nearly 50,000*l.* a day, for three hundred days in the year. The operation of such a sum, brought daily into the market to purchase stocks, which is to be extinguished, and not to return to the market, cannot fail to have an effect in favour of public credit as much beyond all calculation as it will be beyond all experience.

It is a farther consolation and encouragement under our actual exertions, that we are now approaching fast towards that period, when the original sinking fund will have reached its maximum; and when, by the addition of the 1 per cent which has been appropriated for the gradual discharge of the capital in every loan of the present war, the permanent sinking fund will amount to eight millions sterling a year. When I said, that the plan proposed will prevent the increase of permanent taxes, which otherwise must have been levied on articles of consumption, I ought to have added, that by avoiding such an addition to the permanent taxes, we accelerate our arrival at the period when a part of the taxes already subsisting may be abolished. But the advantages of the measure are not confined to the question of economy, however important; nor to the operations of the sinking fund, however salutary; nor to the avoiding of new taxes, however desirable to the people at large: nor to the maintenance of our public credit, however essential to our prosperity: they are calculated to demonstrate to our enemies, and to the world at large, that we possess inexhaustible resources, together with the disposition to use them; and that we are determined to assert and to secure that proud position which we hold, and which, I trust, we shall long continue to hold among nations.

I shall now avail myself of your lordship's indulgence, to take a short notice of the principal objection to which this bill has been thought liable. It has been said by the noble baron, and has been suggested to me by others, for whose opinions also I feel a sincere respect, that the bill having exempted all incomes below 60*l.*, and having imposed the payment in a progressive scale, from 60*l.* to

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200*l.*, the principle of gradual rise is admitted, and ought to have been pursued through all the higher classes of income. I contend with all due defcrence, that such a rise would be contrary to all the safety and rights of property; that it is worthy only of the French council of Five Hundred, and consequently would be disgraceful to a British parliament; and that it would amount to neither more nor less than the introduction of a plan for equalizing fortunes; and to the implied inference, that because a man possesses much, therefore more shall be taken from him than is proportionably taken from others. Nor, when the matter is fairly considered, is there any inconsistency in the exemption given to incomes below 60*l.* That exemption is only a liberal construction and exercise of the principle, that in levying a tax upon income, we ought not to extend it to incomes which may be necessary to actual subsistence: and having established that point at 60*l.* a year, there must be some gradations beyond it in order to arrive at the one-tenth:—otherwise, it would happen that the man of 65*l.* a year, would by the payment of 6*l.* 10*s.* become poorer than the man of 60*l.* a year, and so in proportion in advancing higher. Perhaps it might have been more strictly conformable to the proposed system, to have confined the scale within 100*l.* a year. But I give no opinion contrary to the more liberal sentiment which has been exercised by the framers of the bill. I am only solicitous to establish the consistency of the principle, by which the inequalities of income remain as they were found; and by which the privations of the year bear, within the year, in an equal proportion upon all. The notion of requiring a higher proportion from the higher classes, exclusive of its levelling tendency, would imply, that in all taxes upon consumption also, every individual should be rated in proportion to his income; and that when a man of 400*l.* a year pays a duty of five shillings for a bushel of salt, or for any given quantity of tea or wine, the possessor of 4,000*l.* a year ought to pay fifty shillings. It is no answer to this, that the use of such articles is, in some degree, voluntary. Happily, such a system, which certainly would be unjust and most mischievous, is as certainly impracticable.

There is another objection, which is equally unsound, though more plausible. We are told, that one species of income is more valuable than another: and therefore, as a fair price for its protection, that it ought to pay in proportion to its value: for example! that an annuity for life being worth only ten years purchase, and an income resulting from an estate in fee being worth thirty years purchase, the latter ought to pay three times as much as the former. I confess that, for a moment, and when this notion first occurred in the debates of the last session, I conceived it to have some solidity: but a little reflexion will show that the whole difficulty arises from a confusion in terms, and from blending together the ideas of income and of capital. Income, as income, cannot be distinguished, and brought into a scale of taxation, whatever may be the nature and value of the fund from which it is derived. The moment that income is rated by its value in the market, it ceases to have the properties of income, and becomes capital. And then a new question presents itself:—will you impose your contribution upon capital? I conceive that a tax on capital would be unattainable. How would it be possible to value the different estates of the owners and occupiers of land, and all the different modifications, conditions, settlements, remainders, and reversions, to which real property is liable? Still more, at how many years purchase, and by what rules, will you value the varying incomes of artists, manufacturers, and mercantile and professional men? They are in the nature of incomes, for life or for years, and generally with the advantage of being in a course of increase and improvement. It is true that they are subject to innumerable accidents and changes; but they cannot be distinguished in their average from other annuities, no more than those annuities can be distinguished from incomes which are nominally for ever.

Will it be contended, that, in point of real value, an unsettled estate, which its owner will leave to his children, is of more worth to him, than if the same estate were for his life only, and already settled on his son and his descendants? Would an estate so settled on him for life, with remainder to his heirs male, be more valuable to him, than it would be if he had no son, and it were settled on some distant relation or on a stranger? And if on a stranger, how is it more valuable to the possessor, than any other annuity for life? The income arising from commerce or a profession, becomes, on the retreat or de-

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mise of its present owner, the property of another, just as much as the income arising from an estate or from an annuity for life or years. In short, we cannot look to income, as liable to a different valuation in every specific case; nor as a property fairly to be deemed an object of taxation, with a reference to a longer interest than the life of its possessor:

Tanquam
Sit proprium cui-quam, puncto quod mobilis horæ
Nunc prece, nunc pretio, nunc vi, nunc sorte supremâ,
Permutet dominos et cedat in altera jura.

And therefore it is, that by this bill, in all cases indiscriminately (and if it were not indiscriminately it would be unjustly), the accruing income of the year is made liable, for the year, to a deduction in a rated proportion which equally affects all.

Such then, my lords, is the plan before us; establishing a system of supply, essentially important in the present struggle, essentially beneficial on the eventual return of peace, and such as will hereafter induce all nations to pause, before they bring upon us the necessity of engaging in war with them. I must once more repeat, my lords, that this measure has been accomplished by the union of opinions respecting the nature of the French hostility; by the affectionate and grateful attachment which is felt by all for a sovereign who is justly considered as the father of his people; and by the confidence which is reposed in the councils of that sovereign, and in the wisdom of parliament; or, in other words, by the general conviction of men's minds, under which (as a noble marquis pointedly expressed himself on the first day of the session) "all opposition is dead and buried." I may add, without any want of candour, that the public opinion is unequivocally marked, when public men, in a period of unexampled anxiety, can retire into obscurity without exciting, in a great and enlightened empire, even a whisper of public regret.

My lords, I have repeatedly stood in this place, during the last five years, a foreboder of increasing difficulties and dangers; nor shall I ever be disposed to flatter either your lordships or myself, or the country at large. But I now look forwards, and with good hopes, to the cheering approach of better prospects. And at this hour, if we could consider ourselves merely as a maritime state, singly opposed to France and to the naval powers who are so unfortunate as to be compelled to act with France, and to submit to be called her allies, the contest would be at an end. For what object of contest could there be between naval antagonists; the one of which has lost to the other, all its commerce, all its colonies, all its external possessions, all its seas, and nearly all its fleets; a loss including, when the Spanish and Dutch prizes are added to the list, above threescore ships of the line, and more than double that number of frigates? I cannot hesitate to say, that a naval power, so circumstanced, and so blocked up in all its coasts and ports, is defeated and beaten. Her inhabitants may collect in crowds upon the shore, and call hard names, and use opprobrious language, but they are beaten, and have ceased to be a maritime people for a long period of time. So far as our insular interests are in question, the war is brought to a predicament, in which a man may place his maps before him, and rack his information and ingenuity to find new objects of conquest and acquisition. But in stating this, let me not be understood to give, or to convey, any opinion relative, either to the weakness or stability of the monstrous government which has established itself in France. It would be presumption to say what may be the permanence of a power, which seizes and appropriates, without scruple or remorse, the resources of other nations. No man can foretel how long a lawless horde of robbers and murderers may subsist by pillage and by crimes, before they are overtaken by human or divine justice. But one truth at least is obvious and certain. So long as the French leaders shall appear to have no means of existence, but in prolonging the miseries and calamities which they have caused, and whilst they retain the appetite and power of mischief and destruction, it would be madness and folly, on our part, to suppose that we can revert in safety to the blessings of peace. We ought not to hope for peace, so long as the revolutionizing system maintains its activity. That activity is still exerting itself, with all the agonies of fatigued but insatiate malignity, and amidst scenes of depopulation, bankruptcy, discontent and revolt. So far as the mere safety of these islands is in question, we are safe in our own courage and resources; but in looking towards the wished-for period of pacification, we must never forget, that the

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security of Europe is essential to the security of the British empire. We cannot separate them.

Permit me, my lords, before I sit down, to advert to a circumstance, which, if left unexplained, might subject me to the imputation of speaking with an illiberal warmth and prejudice. On the present and on other occasions, I have used harsh language respecting the French as a nation; and surely they have been, during nine years, the most detestable people that ever disgraced the globe on which we live, and breathe, and have our being. They have been, and still continue to be, the scourge and pest of afflicted humanity. But I wish, once for all, to be understood not to speak of the French such as I saw and knew them twelve years ago; nor of the French such as I hope, one day, again to see them. I speak of them as they are, a credulous, subjugated, irreligious, immoral, and cruel people; blind instruments of the corruptions, caprices, and crimes of a few desperate regicides. I speak of them as they are, and will continue so to speak of them on every occasion that may present itself; because I feel and know, that we cannot be too often and too strongly impressed with a true opinion of our enemy, and with a true sense of our danger. But, God forbid that I should apply such expressions to the nation which I saw, composed of a brave and generous nobility, and a good-tempered and ingenious people; even then, however, following false lights, and tending towards the precipice down which they have since fallen. It is among the bitter misfortunes of that nobility, and of the other respectable classes, forced into exile and laden with distresses of many kinds, to feel ashamed of the country which gave them birth, and to carry about with them the sentiment, that the very name of a Frenchman will, for ages to come, sound gratingly to the ears of mankind. The contrast, my lords, is obvious, and offers itself to our attention. I see it with complacency and with pride. It is a pardonable pride, and of a good and moral tendency. Englishmen derive, from their consciousness of being Englishmen, an elevation of mind, which, both to the present race and to posterity, will operate as an incessant encouragement to national virtue and to right exertions. "Vera gloria radices agit, atque etiam propagatur."

The Earl of *Darnley* said, that the present measure was one which their lordships were called upon by the most powerful motives to sanction, as, exclusively of the great and salutary principle on which it proceeded, it was calculated in every point of view to defeat the designs, and ruin the power of the enemy.

The Duke of *Bedford* said, that the bill turned upon two great and leading principles. The first of the two principles was, how far it was wise and expedient to raise a great portion of the supplies within the year, rather than by the usual way of loan? It was impossible to discuss this principle by arguments drawn from experience or comparative effect, because it was a mere speculative question, and therefore could not be treated in the same manner as that which had stood the test of trial in repeated instances ever since the establishment of the funding system. There was, however, the constant and uniform practice of our ancestors against it; nay more, there was the practice of the present minister himself, who had, during five years of expensive war, followed the ancient plan of raising the supplies by loans. If, then, we were now to adopt the mode recommended by this bill, it would be an admission that the author of it had been for that space of time in the wrong, and that the present was preferable to that which he had hitherto pursued. No noble lord, he believed, would support it as positively good; but would merely argue for it as expedient, and adapted to our present circumstances; but yet it would not be difficult to prove that, even comparatively, it was a more injurious mode of raising the supplies than that which had been so long pursued. The second principle of the bill was, whether, if the propriety of raising a great part of the supplies within the year were admitted, a tax on income was the desirable means? This was a question of material importance in the view in which the measures of the last year were considered; for, as by raising seven millions within the year, it was contended that the general principle of raising the supplies within the year was recognised, it might hereafter be contended that, by adopting the present bill, they recognised the principle of taxing income. Now, nothing could be more injurious to the state, than to assume this as a principle recognised, and to act upon it. It had been the general practice of taxation, to levy as great a portion as

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possible of the sum wanted upon articles of luxury and of consumption; and, so long as that practice could be continued, it would never be considered as materially unjust in its operation, though one description might for the moment be more immediately touched than others; and although the whole community might not pay towards it in equal proportions, still, as it was optional, it could not be deemed fundamentally wrong. If therefore it was abandoned, it was a confession that we could not go on in the most equitable course of taxation. This, then, must be considered as a forced contribution. If the sum could be raised by a tax on consumption, every body must acknowledge that it would be a preferable mode. But if the state of the country was such that a forced contribution must be the means of supporting the government, then it became their lordships to consider well, whether the general principle of taxation, which required that every man should pay in proportion to the protection he received, which protection was commensurate with his property, was acted upon in this bill. In his mind the criterion was extremely erroneous. In one case it would be a tax, as it professed to be, upon income; in another, it would be a tax upon capital. A temporary tax upon income must in its nature be, in many instances, a tax upon capital. The present tax was said to be for three years. Thus, then, a person possessed of 1,000*l.* a year, and expending the whole of it, could not without considerable inconvenience reduce his expenditure to 900*l.*; whereas, by taking from his capital 100*l.*, he will diminish his income but 5*l.* a year for each year, and with comparatively a trifling inconvenience, he will be thus enabled to pay his tax. Persons, on the other hand, who possess greater incomes than they annually expend, convert their surplus into capital. In both cases, therefore, the tax takes from their capital, and not from their income. Yet possessing this clear character of being, in most instances, a tax upon capital, it would not be difficult to show how unequal it would be in its operation; for if the annuitant is obliged to have recourse to his capital, you take from him a fiftieth part of his property, as the average value of existing annuities cannot be said to be more than five years purchase. You take from the stockholder little more than a two hundredth part, and from the land owner only a three-hundredth part. If the tax should continue so long as to make it inconvenient for a person to discharge it by disposing of a part of his capital, then in its effect, it will have all the consequences of a permanent tax; in which case it will not only prove more injurious to individuals, but to the general welfare of the state; for there is a most essential distinction between taking a sum from the public upon articles as they are consumed, and taking a sum from the means by which produce is to be obtained. The latter strikes directly at the vital principle of all national prosperity, for it operates as a check upon improvement. At a time when every writer upon political economy is of opinion, that tithe operates as a general check to the advancement of agriculture, and the melioration of the country, we are about to adopt a measure which will establish a new tithe over the whole kingdom; and that which in its partial operation is deemed to be so injurious, we are about to generalize and extend to all the arts and manufactures, as well as to add it to the existing tithe upon agriculture. Now, when it is agreed on all hands that the tithe which is derived from annual profits ought to be converted into principal, if it could be done without affecting the interests of those who derive their income from it, you are about to establish a more enlarged tithe, and that in the heaviest way; for it not only proposes to take a tenth of every man's industry, but in many cases a tenth of the capital necessary to be employed in order to make that industry productive. In the mixed and uncertain tendency of the tax, the most striking inequalities will impede even its success as a measure of finance, whereas, if it had been directed at capital, it would have been less complicated and less unequal. It is a pretty general opinion that capital cannot be got at nor ascertained; but if the principle be once admitted, that capital or property is to be charged in proportion to the protection it derives from the government, surely it may be discovered. I do not feel it to be my duty, continued the noble duke, because I state my objections to one tax, to suggest another in its stead; but yet I think that a tax might be found equal to the exigency of the moment, and not liable to any of the objections which are justly advanced against this bill —I mean a tax upon successions, not merely collateral, but lineal.—This is not

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my idea, but is the suggestion of a noble friend of mine, whose abilities this House has often had occasion to witness, particularly on points of finance (the earl of Lauderdale).—Having stated his objections to the principle of the bill, his grace went into an examination of its particular provisions, and concluded with remonstrating against the measure being injurious, impolitic, and unjust.

The *Lord Chancellor* said, that the present bill was professedly a bill which had for its object the taxation of income, and the noble duke had said, it embraced two important principles, the one, the principle of raising a considerable part of the supplies of the year within the year; the other the principle of effecting that measure by the means of a tax on income. With regard to the first, the noble duke did not appear to have completely made up his mind: but he termed it a mere speculative question, and a mere speculative question it was, inasmuch as it was new in the practice of finance; but although former financiers had not taken such bold and comprehensive views of the possibility of successfully enforcing measures of finance of a far greater extent than had hitherto been attempted, it did not follow that the measure was not likely to be eminently successful, and it was agreed on all hands, that for a variety of important considerations, if a large portion of the supplies could be raised within the year, it was most desirable. It ought, however, to be recollected that the present chancellor of the exchequer, who had proposed the bill, was the very person who had advised and effectually supported the plan of annually setting aside a part of the supplies of the year for the useful purpose of applying it to the reduction of the national debt—a plan which had now been for some years continued, and from which the public had derived advantages so important that the country could not forget the gratitude that was due to the man whose genius had prompted him to carry into execution a design so noble and so useful. It was reasonable, therefore, to infer that the present measure of raising a tax amounting to ten millions upon income, would be found practicable. The noble duke, indeed, had told the House that a tax on capital directly would be far preferable; to which it was a sufficient answer to state the absolute impossibility of ascertaining what the capital of individuals respectively amounted to. The noble duke had laid great stress upon the inequalities of the bill, but most of his arguments on that head seemed to have arisen from not having kept the real object of the bill, namely, a tax on income, distinct from considerations that apply solely to a tax on capital. All large taxes must be liable to the imputation of inequality more or less, but as much attention had been paid to avoid that effect, as ever was paid to any measure of finance. The noble duke had told the House that somebody or other had projected a tax that would answer the same end as the present bill, and be less felt, viz. a tax on all successions: but surely a very little reflection would serve to show that such a tax must be in its individual instances so enormous as to be ruinous to the last degree. Hitherto taxes on articles of consumption had been selected by ministers; and it was evident they were wise in so doing.

The bill was read a third time, and passed.

The King's Message relative to a Union with Ireland.] Jan. 22. Mr Secretary Dundas presented the following Message from his Majesty:

"GEORGE *R.*

"His Majesty is persuaded that the unremitting industry, with which our enemies persevere in their avowed design of effecting the separation of Ireland from this kingdom, cannot fail to engage the particular attention of parliament, and his majesty recommends it to this House to consider of the most effectual means of counteracting, and finally defeating, this design; and he trusts, that a review of all the circumstances which have recently occurred (joined to the sentiment of mutual affection and common interests, will dispose the parliaments of both kingdoms to provide, in the manner which they shall judge most expedient, for settling such a complete and final adjustment as may best tend to improve and perpetuate a connexion, essential for their common security, and to augment and consolidate the strength, power, and resources, of the British empire. G. *R.*"

A similar Message was also presented to the Lords by lord Grenville.

Debate in the Commons on the King's Message relative to a Union with Ireland.] Jan. 23. Mr. Secretary Dundas presented to the House, by his majesty's command, Copies and Extracts of Papers,

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containing secret Information, received by his majesty's government, relative to the proceedings of different persons and societies in Great Britain and Ireland, engaged in a treasonable conspiracy, and to the design carried on by our enemies, in concert with such persons and societies, for effecting the separation of Ireland from this kingdom, sealed up."

On the order of the day for taking into consideration his Majesty's Message of yesterday, being read,

Mr. Secretary *Dundas* said, he considered it unnecessary on the present occasion, to do more than simply move an address of thanks to his majesty for his gracious communication, and stating that the House would take the subject into their serious consideration. On a future opportunity, after the House had had leisure to reflect on the matter, and to peruse the documents now laid before them, it would be time enough to enter into any discussion. This course he was the more inclined to pursue, as it was not easy to conjecture the nature of the arguments which could be adduced in the present stage of the business. He should content himself, therefore, with moving, "That an humble Address be presented to his majesty, to return his majesty the thanks of this House, for his most gracious message; and to assure his majesty, that impressed with a deep sense of the magnitude of the objects to which his majesty is pleased to direct our attention, and anxious at all times, and particularly at the present crisis, to avail ourselves of every opportunity to improve and perpetuate the connexion between Great Britain and Ireland, so essential to their common security, and to promote the strength and prosperity of every part of the British empire, we shall not fail to enter on this consideration with all due dispatch, and with the diligence and attention which its transcendent importance demands.

Mr. *Sheridan* rose and said;—I must declare candidly, Sir, that I am not of opinion, that nothing more is now necessary than to return our thanks, for his majesty's gracious communication. It is impossible to view a subject like this in so narrow a light. When we recollect that within no very long period, a solemn, entire, and "final adjustment" (mark the words) took place between Great Britain and Ireland, it does seem to be incumbent on those who come forward with a new proposal of adjustment, to show us that the last solemn and final adjustment has not answered the purposes for which it was intended. His majesty's ministers assume that the House is in possession of information to convince them that this adjustment has not been effectual. This does not appear to be the conclusion which they are entitled to draw, or the course which the House are authorized to pursue. Before any new plan of such magnitude and importance as that which is known to be in agitation, can be entertained, it ought to be made manifest, that some new contract is necessary, and that the solemn, entire, and final adjustment formerly ratified and concluded has not been attended with that security to the empire, which it was expected to produce. I am struck, too, with this consideration still more forcibly when I think of the declaration of the Irish parliament sanctioned by this House. The resolution deserves particular attention: it is—"To represent to his majesty, that his subjects of Ireland are entitled to a free constitution; that the imperial crown of Ireland is inseparably annexed to the crown of Great Britain, on which connexion the happiness of both nations essentially depends; but that the kingdom of Ireland is a distinct dominion, having a parliament of her own, the sole legislature thereof. That there is no power whatsoever competent to make laws to bind this nation, except the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland, upon which exclusive right of legislation we consider the very essence of our liberties to depend, a right which we claim as the birth-right of the people of Ireland, and which we are determined, in every situation of life, to assert and maintain." When I find a declaration so clear and forcible as this, solemnly adopted by the Irish parliament, communicated to this House, sanctioned and recorded by us; when I consider that this final adjustment has been recognized as the only solid basis of the connexion between the two countries, I feel myself justified in demanding some explanation why it is now to be abandoned, and what other final adjustment is to be proposed. It may be thought new and unusual to take up the subject in this enlarged view in this stage. The present, however, are times when slight forms ought not to interfere with substantial duties. My opinion is, that the question should be met in the very outset, and canvassed in the very first shape in which it appears, regardless of

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the misrepresentations to which by such a conduct, I may be exposed. There are questions of such magnitude and importance to the public interest, that in treating them freely and manfully, we ought to despise all little obloquy and petty attack. In such cases to fear the misapprehensions of ignorance or the misrepresentations of malice, is to forfeit every title to our own esteem, and meanly to shrink from the discharge of the most sacred duty. Such are the feelings by which I am actuated, and such the temper with which I approach the discussion of this great question.

There is something in the conduct of those who now so boldly introduce this question to our consideration, strangely inconsistent with the affected delicacy which, on former occasions, when the affairs of Ireland were the subject of discussion, they observed. We recollect the time when they felt how tender a thing it was at all to discuss any point with which the independence of the sister kingdom could be supposed to be involved. "What," said they—"Beware of touching the jealous spirit of independence by which Ireland is actuated!" That trembling delicacy, however, seems now to be completely removed. Without explanation, they now come forward with a plan by which the independence and separate existence of Ireland is to be annihilated. I hope, then, that we shall hear no more of the objection that the discussion of such a subject is calculated to irritate and to incense the people of Ireland. Those who have brought before us a question which demands such extensive consideration, such ample discussion, ought to have reflected what was likely to be the tendency of their own measure. It is our duty to canvass it freely and fully; to speak out manfully; to utter our opinions firmly. I sincerely believe that ministers think the measure which they propose to be for the real interests of Ireland and of the empire; that they press it in order to continue a connexion, which I, as well as they, consider essential to the prosperity and to the existence of both. In declaring this to be my conviction of the motives by which ministers are actuated, I claim it equally from their justice to believe, that I am as little likely as themselves to promote any measure by which the connexion could be affected, or to encourage those who would unite Ireland in a fatal connexion with our cruel and rapacious foe. I trust that the ambitious designs of the enemy will be frustrated—that their attempts to separate the empire will be frustrated. The enemy, we are told, persevere in their design of effecting a separation. What, then, is the course which ministers pursue to defeat this attempt? What is the mode they embrace to fortify and consolidate the empire? In this state of things which they describe, after a rebellion newly extinguished, they come forward with a proposition calculated to cherish the hopes of those who have long pursued rebellion, to divide those by whose exertions rebellion was subdued. Who then encourages those designs, which are stated to be the object of the enemy? I did, indeed, hope, that, after the glorious achievements of our inestimable seamen; after the defeats which the enemy received on their attempts at invasion, they would have abandoned their design. When they find, however, those who aided to protect their country from rebellion and hostile attack treated as unworthy of confidence, when they find some of the oldest and most faithful servants of the crown dismissed from their employments; is it wonderful that their hopes should be revived, and their design still pursued? In the message with which this subject is ushered into the House, the word union is not mentioned. The right hon. gentleman, however, will not surely intrench himself, behind a piece of form. Every one knows that here adjustment means union. Every one knows, too, that the terms are, to a considerable extent, already fixed, and that a certain person in Ireland, who fills in that country the office which you, Sir, fill here, has publicly declared his hostility to the measure. Sorry am I to see likewise, in the dismissal of the chancellor of the exchequer of Ireland, an instance of the mode by which the scheme is to be supported.

In contemplating, then, the fatal effects of bringing forward the question at the present moment, the object of the amendment I shall propose will be to put a stop to the farther progress of the design, not with a view to prevent discussion, for I have no objection that the subject should be fully discussed both here and in Ireland, but to prevent the attempt from being carried into effect in the present situation of affairs. In proceeding to consider the question in this point of view, I assume as a position, to establish which no argument is necessary, that separation

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would be ruin to both countries, ruin more or less rapid, but that a connexion of Ireland with France is the worst alternative that can be supposed, and pregnant with immediate destruction. The next point which I shall endeavour to establish is, that a union at present without the unequivocal sense of the Irish people in its favour, that a union effected by fraud, by intrigue, by corruption, by intimidation, would ultimately tend to endanger the connexion between the two countries. In the next place, is it possible that Ireland, in the present circumstances, can act as a free nation upon this most important question? Upon these grounds do I rest the argument against the progress of the measure. I hope we shall not hear it contended that we are best qualified to judge what is for the interest of Ireland. Those then, who, looking at the importance of close connexion, of joint effort and vigour, agree with me in thinking, that to press such a proposition as that in contemplation would lead to disunion and weakness, will oppose the progress of the measure at present. If those who propose the scheme consider the means by which it is to be carried as nothing, they may think the present opportunity very favourable to their views, will they follow the advice of a certain official pamphleteer (Mr. E Cooke), who recommends them to profit by the example of the old volunteers, who took advantage of the embarrassments of the country, and retort upon the people of Ireland their own game? Will they avail themselves of the embarrassment, the weakness of Ireland, which the person to whom I allude states to be considerations so favourable to the project? But, if any man could be so mean as to pursue this unworthy policy, what then would be the situation of Ireland? What would be the feelings of Irishmen if they could say to England—"You took up our cause in a moment of difficulty and danger; you assisted us with your force and your resources; but at last you took advantage of our weakness; with forty thousand of your troops in the bosom of our country, you did not wait a willing consent, but carried into effect a union, upon which we could not exert an independent choice.

The nature of the means by which it is to be carried there is too much reason to suspect. Those who can enter into the distinction of negative success, will be at no loss to understand the effect of negative intimidation. Will not the people of Ireland have reason to suspect the motives of sending troops to them; and when they find a proposal for putting an end to their separate existence so soon brought forward; when they find their independence thus threatened with insult, and every effort exerted to intimidate those who distinguish themselves in its defence, what then may be the effect of such reflexions as these in any future insurrection that might unhappily take place? Should any future rebellion occur, I will not say that it will be justified, but its pretences would have a colour and plausibility far different from the last. Would they not say, We rise to recover our independence, our separate existence, of which we have been deprived without our consent? The last insurrection was supported partly by the Catholic, partly by the Presbyterian, partly by the wild republicans; but the pretence of a future insurrection would address itself to all equally, and be recommended as a struggle for independence unjustly taken away. Such would be the consequences of a union effected in the present circumstances. I do not say that insurrection for such purposes would be justifiable, but in point of fact it cannot be denied, that the Irish people have no liberty to judge of the measure by which they are to be so deeply affected, in honour and in interest.—We must admit the impolicy which has marked the conduct of this country to Ireland for three centuries; and, when at last she wrung from our tardy justice those rights which it was a shame and a scandal for England, that assumed the character of the superior country, to refuse, is it not incredible that sixteen years after her rights were confirmed, she should be called upon to resign that parliament to which she is indebted for the attainment of her just claims? Has the Irish parliament, then, forfeited the title which it gained to the confidence of the people? The supporters of the plan of union will hardly contend that the parliament ought to be cashiered for demerit. Has not that parliament been congratulated, that by their wisdom, their patriotism, the country has prospered? But a rebellion has taken place. Here again the parliament is not only exempted from reproach, but is held up to admiration. By the vigilance, ability, and firmness of parliament, domestic treason, and foreign invasion have been disconcerted and defeated. Are the people of

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Ireland then to be told, that they will be better secured against the machinations of conspirators, by the vigilance of that parliament, the reports made by which of plots and conspiracies were found by the decision of a jury to be unfounded? In Ireland, indeed, there was a real plot of the most dangerous and extensive nature; and what I maintain is, that the people of Ireland will not easily believe that they will be better protected from treasonable attempts by a parliament here, than they were by that parliament to which is ascribed the merit of their safety. Perhaps they are, as it is reported, to be allowed to retain something under the title of a parliament: a national vestry is to sit to do the business of the parish of Ireland! With the mock importance of this ignoble dignity, this unsubstantial mockery of power and greatness, will their interests be better maintained, and their safety better secured? But, is it possible that a parliament with such merits should, by an unbiassed resolution, resign the guardianship of their country's rights and interests? Has the parliament of this country superior knowledge of the affairs of Ireland? No, surely. On this point I can appeal to an authority which many here will be disposed to admit; that of the lord chancellor of Ireland. Lord Clare says, that the nation and the parliament of England are more ignorant of the affairs of Ireland than they are of any other country. And is it to a parliament like this that the interests of the sister kingdom are to be confided? Is it to you that the people of Ireland are to look for protection, for improvement when their own parliament is cashiered? Are you to leave the rebels unmolested; are you to overlook armed banditti infesting society, and read the Riot act to disperse Lords and Commons? Would you impute to them the merit of having saved the country, and the next moment call on them to resign their authority for ever? Can we doubt, then, that this object is to be carried into effect by intrigue, by corruption, by intimidation? Has not a threat been thrown out, in what may be considered as an official proclamation, that the troops which had been sent to Ireland may be withdrawn, that the money with which she is aided may be withheld, and the country left helpless and devoted? Must not the Irish, then, who have supported the connexion, feel that they are not at liberty to choose? Such are the insinuations which an Irish clerk or secretary has thought proper to throw out in his official pamphlet. What are we to think, however, when we see marquis Cornwallis, either by his own authority, or in consequence of the instruction he receives from this country, dismissing some of the most respectable servants of the crown as unfit to serve his majesty, because they are not favourable to the projected union? What will be the consequence when the volunteer corps find that they are no longer considered worthy of confidence the moment they show a dislike to lend themselves to the support of this measure? If the lord lieutenant is authorized to extend the system of removal to all who are unwilling to concur, can it be said that free will or choice is allowed? I think, then, that I have shown that Ireland is not free to pronounce against the proposed union; that it will afford a dangerous pretence for insurrection; and that this projected adjustment will only unite two wretched bodies, leaving the minds separate. I should like to know what would be said of France were she thus to carry into effect a union, not by shameless oppression of a neutral state, but of one connected with her by the dearest ties, one whose subjects were bleeding in her cause in every quarter of the world? What would be thought of France if she bounteously proffered her assistance, sent her troops, lent her money, and when refusal was impossible, incorporated a subjected people? Would you not treat the pretence of free choice with scorn? would you not mark the insult with indignation? What would you think if the Directory threatened to abandon this people to treason and to invasion? If they arrogantly dismissed all who ventured to dissent from their measures, would you not deride the man who should call such a union the union of consent and of free choice? The king of Sardinia is made to assert his willingness to resign his crown; but who considers it as free consent? When we see intimidation, and corruption, and intrigue, so unequivocally displayed to effect this measure, how shall we avoid the charge of that injustice which in others we so justly condemn? We hear French principles reprobated. Let us be careful at the same time to avoid French practices. Let us hold up to disdain and to indignation the conduct of the French, by a studious endeavour to keep ourselves unpolluted by their guilt. Let us avoid all

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suspicion of corruption and of intrigue, in a transaction of such magnitude. Let the union which we covet be that of affection; let it be that of minds and spirits, as well as of interests and of power. To endeavour to attain the object in the mode hitherto begun, is unworthy of Great Britain. It resembles the marriages which still occur in some parts of Ireland, that begin in fraud, and are carried into execution by force. Forbear the brutal rape, when you may obtain the willing partner. You should not publish the banns of such a marriage by the trumpets of your 40,000 men. Ireland, while she has seen so many of her sons swallowed up in the grave and the dungeon, is not fit for the celebration of hymeneal rites. Forbear then, to pursue a course so unworthy; a course that threatens to lay the seeds of future insurrection, and to end in weakness, not in strength, in distraction, not in unity.

Seeing, as I do, the danger of carrying the plan into effect now, I cannot help asking, what is the necessity of such dispatch? why should the present moment be considered so important to be seized? Ministers have not thought proper to favour us with any explanations. In a pamphlet ascribed to a gentleman on the other side of the water, indeed, I find some attempts made to show the importance of the present time for carrying the measure into effect. This performance is well known to be circulated by government, and may be supposed, therefore, to contain the arguments by which they may defend the measure; though I must say, that a more pert, flimsy, offensive performance, never was offered to the judgment of a nation. Disaffection, it is true, may be found in Ireland; but what connexion is there between the disease and the remedy proposed? We seem to resemble the poor man in the play, who is very ill, and exclaims, "What! will nobody give me advice? I am ready to follow any prescription." So here a disease was admitted, and we seemed to act as if any remedy was perfectly applicable. We never consider whether the remedy is at all likely to cure the disorder. What then are the arguments for dispatch, by the official promulgation of the Castle creed? Whimsical enough, indeed, they will be found. The principal parties against whom it is necessary to guard, it seems, are the pope and the English opposition. In the present state of the English opposition, we should have thought that he needed not have been in great alarm for the effects of their exertions. Hear what he says on this subject—"Add to this the melancholy reflexion, that the Irish parliament has been long made the theatre for British faction. When at a loss for subjects of grievance in Great Britain, they ever turn their eyes to this kingdom, in the kind hope that any seed of discontent may be nourished, by their fostering attention, into strength and maturity. Incapable of beating the minister on his own ground, they change the place of attack, and wound him from the side of Ireland. Need I allude to the question of the commercial propositions, the question of the regency, and the question of the Catholics; when we have seen the leaders of the British opposition come foward to support the character of Irish rebels, to palliate and to justify Irish treason, and almost to vindicate Irish rebellion?"—As to the Catholics, his object seems to be to cut them off from all hopes of seeing their claims realized, and in this state of despair, he says, that dissatisfaction will sink into acquiescence, and acquiescence soften into consent. This, no doubt, would make a very pretty sentence in a novel for Mr. Hookham; but the pamphleteer has no sort of hesitation in overthrowing entirely the hopes of three millions of people, and applying an insuperable barrier to the attainment of their claims. With more than the pride of human ignorance, and more than the presumption of mortal arrogance, this pamphleteer ventures to set at defiance all experience, to despise all established policy, to conceive that so many men could live content to be excluded from all civil rights on account of religious differences. He pronounces an eternal exclusion against three millions of the people of Ireland from all share in the government to which they must submit. Mark, too, the indelicacy of another argument which he urges to show the necessity of dispatch—"What then is intended by a steady and firm administration? Is it a determined, inflexible, support of protestant ascendancy, and a rigorous and indignant rejection of Catholic claims? Who will be a guarantee of that system, and whom will it content? The Catholics will not acquiesce in its propriety. A party of Protestants in Ireland term it unjust and absurd; another party in England term it by fouler names; great leaders in opposition, possibly the future ministers of England may condemn

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it; and some members of the British cabinet are supposed to be averse to it. Its stability may rest upon accident, upon the death of a single character, upon the change of a minister, on the temper of a lord lieutenant; and the policy of this system is much doubted by the people of England."—Such arguments as these, indeed, do not seem very well calculated to "soften acquiescence into consent." To the Protestant he says, that the only chance of their being able finally to overcome the importunity of Catholic claims, is from the character of the British parliament, while to the Catholics he holds out the temptation of their claims being there admitted. This inconsistency does appear somewhat extraordinary as both arguments appear in the same pamphlet. As the pamphleteer probably understands Irish as well as English, it is surprising that he did not give the one in Irish and the other in English, to suit both the parties whom he was anxious to convince; in their present state of opposition they may not prove satisfactory to either. For the mischiefs occasioned by the English opposition his remedy is rather comical: it seems that our speeches, in the reports through the newspapers, have so much influence, as to create faction in the Irish parliament. What is the remedy? Why, to bring his members into the very focus of sedition, to hear all our speeches by way of counteracting the inflammatory tendency of our speeches in the newspapers! It must be confessed that the remedy is somewhat in the Irish style. His third argument is, that the legislatures may differ. Is not experience, however, against this argument? He instances the commercial propositions and the regency. But what probability is there now that they should differ, when unity of councils was more than ever felt to be necessary for both? As to the case of the commercial propositions they were given as a boon by this country, and rejected in Ireland, as containing conditions derogatory to their independence. In the case of the regency, the difference was not in principle, but merely in the degree of restriction which was to be imposed on the executive government.—The next argument of this English secretary, who has thriven in Ireland to what he now is, provokes mingled contempt and indignation. Hear what he says to show the propriety of seizing the present moment:—as to a time of war, it is true that the volunteers took advantage of the embarrassments of Great Britain in the last war, to assert the independence of our parliament. It is likewise true that the United Irishmen in the present war have taken advantage of the supposed weakness of Great Britain to play the game of separation. When, therefore, enemies of the empire take advantage of a time of war and embarrassment to effect its ruin, we should turn against them their own game, and make use of a time of war to establish its security." He remembers what the vigour of the Irish enabled them to obtain, and he points out the mode by which you may retract what formerly you could no longer refuse. He tells you how you may gratify your revenge at the sacrifice you made. If any thing could rouse the indignation of the Irish nation it must be sentiments like these, recommending a policy as unworthy of those by whom it should be employed as unjust to the people on whom it should be inflicted.

Such are the arguments by which the union is recommended to us at the present moment. I have only referred to these: nor is it my intention at present to enter much into the consideration of the union as it regards England. Suppose, then, that the Irish parliament was to sit in this place, that the Irish sceptre were placed under your mace, and we were to receive the tributary members whom Ireland should be allowed to send. I know that there is in human nature a disposition to think that in proportion as others are degraded, we acquire a kind of dignity ourselves. I will not inquire then, with what kind of sentiment the proposal will be viewed in the northern parts of the country. It may be thought that Ireland cannot be degraded, by doing that which Scotland has already done. Of the many points in which the cases differ, I shall at at present say nothing. In what I am about to move, I am not sure even of the support of a single voice, and my hopes of success therefore are not very sanguine; but is it nothing to England that should the scheme take place, that respectable and meritorious class of men, the English Roman Catholics, must feel themselves totally cut off from the hope of being admitted to share the rights to which they are entitled? Does the right hon. gentleman, think, too, that the one hundred Irish members will infuse into the constitution that new life and vigour which his great father pronounced necessary, and which, in other times, he pro-

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posed by the introduction of one hundred knights from England? As to the sacrifice of pride to which the Irish nation must submit, though boasting as much Milesian blood as any man, nobody can suppose that such a feeling would warp my judgment on such a question, provided I saw it as a measure in other respects worthy of support. It was no trifling matter too, the changes which the measure would produce here. Is it a slight matter, that by creating a physical impossibility of many members of this House consulting with their constituents, it will give a practical sanction to the principles of those who reprobate all communications with constituents? It has been said by a certain right hon. gentleman, that constituents have nothing to do with their representative, from the day they send him to this House till he goes back to his election, and the argument goes to show, that ignorance is the best support of a regular government. When I read sentiments like these as coming from a member of this House, I was surprised, and had I found them in any other publication, I should have considered it my duty to move, that the attorney-general should be directed to prosecute the publication as I did, when I formerly had the honour to move the prosecution of a pamphlet,* in which this House was represented as not being an essential part of the constitution. These doctrines would doubtless receive much support from the presence of a hundred members, who could not communicate with their constituents; and, truly, after resigning the independence of their own parliament, I should not deem them very likely to support the purity of this. Now, however, when the question forces itself upon our consideration, what right has the Irish parliament, to resolve that instead of going back to their constituents, they shall form part of a foreign legislature? If the parliament assumes such a right, who can say that parliament may not make the king despotic, confer upon the crown the power of the purse, and a "vigour beyond the law?" Precedent may be urged;—but a dangerous and doubtful precedent at a former period will not greatly incline me to give it new force by repetition. If those who complain of the danger of agitating such questions are sincere, why do they reduce us to the dilemma of disputing the doctrine, or admitting all the consequences; of either acknowledging the authority to the destruction of our liberties, or denying it with the consequence of perhaps justifying insurrection? If they fear such questions, they should avoid starting a subject in which they are necessarily involved. A great officer of the crown, now in another House, once asserted, that, "though Lords and Commons should pass a bill overturning the constitution of certain boroughs, it would shake the crown on his majesty's head to give his assent to it." If such could be the effect in a thing comparatively of less moment, what might be the effect in one so much greater as that of a parliament voting itself a part of a foreign legislature? We know that the question is so discussed, and that there is danger that a resolution of such magnitude may at a future period be disputed.

Of the proposal in general, I think that as a remedy it is not suited to the disease, on the existence of which it proceeds. Not merely now, but at all times I am averse to it. Those, however, who only agree with me in disapproving of the time, may vote for the amendment which I shall have the honour to propose. In Ireland the British government has two formidable enemies, poverty and ignorance. If any measure could be devised, to improve the knowledge and extend the prosperity of Ireland, I should support it with sincere pleasure. How does it happen that the Irishman should be found so superior in foreign countries to the Irishman at home. All over the globe he is distinguished for industry, loyalty, energy of character, and talent in every profession and pursuit. To what can this difference be ascribed, but to the government under which he lives? One great cause of the difference too, is to be found in the manner in which men of property exercise their right. Although no written law compels them to any particular direction and use of it, there is a condition paramount to all written laws, which is the tacit condition under which it is enjoyed, but which in Ireland many of the landowners are not careful to observe. Last year I stated, that at one time 12,000 manufacturers, with their families, were compelled to live on the charitable contribution of 5*d.* per week. As to the wretched condition of the peasantry, we have the authority of Mr. Arthur Young, one which, on such a subject, will probably

* Mr. Reeves's Thoughts on the English Government. See Vol. 32, p. 608.

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be admitted. It is a folly to say, that French principles have been the cause of the calamities which Ireland has lately sustained; but it is true that such misery facilitates the operation of the delusions practised to mislead the multitude. Remove the cause of that misery, and you best consult the general prosperity of the empire. A union would tend obviously to render the condition of Ireland still worse than it is, and to give an application and direction to property still less favourable to its interests. I cannot help adding one reflexion more on the argument of the Irish secretary, respecting the mischievous consequences of the conduct of the English opposition. He might have known, that at least at present there was not much reason for apprehension. In another place, a certain noble marquis took an opportunity of congratulating the country in a whimsical anti-climax, not only that rebellion was subdued, but that party was extinguished. He said that party was dead and buried; and he thought proper to cut a few clumsy capers over its grave. He was pleased to say likewise, that party had always been faction. Against such a charge I must protest, and, as a friend to party in the honourable sense of the word, I am anxious to rescue myself from the imputation of being the abettor of a faction. For a person of no great importance, it requires a proper estimate of his own weight to know the place which he ought to fill, for the leader of a party, the talents which inspire confidence, and command respect, are requisite. Such men as the marquis of Rockingham and Mr. Burke, I cannot allow to be branded as the leaders of faction; and I cannot suffer myself to be ranked as a traitor to my king and country, because I have not deserted my friend. I respect too much what once were the principles of many of those who are now in his majesty's councils, to allow them to be stigmatized as faction. The banner of party is furled, but it is not beaten down. I trust that it will again be displayed, and that it will assemble round it the steady friends to true liberty, hostile alike to despotic rule, and to wild innovation.—Mr. Sheridan then moved an amendment, by adding, at the end of the Address, these words: "At the same time to express the surprise and deep regret with which this House now, for the first time, learns from his majesty, that the final adjustment which, upon his majesty's gracious recommendation, took place between the two kingdoms, in the year 1782, and which, by the declaration of the parliaments of both countries, placed the connexion between them upon a solid and permanent basis, has not produced the effects expected from that solemn settlement: and farther, humbly to express to his majesty, that his majesty's faithful Commons having strong reason to believe, that it is in the contemplation of his majesty's ministers to propose a union of the legislatures of the two kingdoms, notwithstanding the said final and solemn adjustment, feel it to be their bounden duty, impressed, as they are, with the most serious apprehension of the consequences of such a proceeding at this time, to take the earliest opportunity humbly to implore his majesty not to listen to the counsels of those who shall advise or promote such a measure at the present crisis, and under the present circumstances of the empire."

Mr. *Canning* rose and said:—If, Sir, my honourable friend, who proposed this amendment, had confined himself in his speech to the single topic which he announced as the main foundation of his objections to the address, that of the impropriety of the time at which the subject of the king's message has been brought forward, I should have felt that upon that topic alone I must have differed widely from him. But I confess, that the opposition which I feel myself bound to give to the amendment, rests equally on the more general grounds which my honourable friend has stated in the course of his speech; through which I shall endeavour, to the best of my ability, to follow him, assigning the reasons which induce me to take a view of the subject so different from that which he has taken. Before, however, I proceed to notice the arguments upon which the amendment is supported, I will first advert to the principal ground upon which is rested the opposition to the address; namely, the resolution entered upon the Journals of the House in 1782. To the same Journals I beg leave to refer for the refutation of the arguments urged by my hon. friend; and that reference will, I trust, completely do away the ground upon which those arguments have been built. It is true, indeed, that the words "final adjustment," were made use of in those resolutions; but if the House will but attend to what followed in the same Journals, they will see

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that the resolutions there recorded, were immediately followed by another resolution evidently of a perspective nature, which declared the necessity of establishing some more permanent system, by which alone the tranquillity and prosperity of Ireland could remain uninterrupted, and continue to be improved. A due attention to this last resolution, must undoubtedly remove all imputation of impropriety from the measure now proposed, and all charge of inconsistency with the former proceedings of the House. The adjustment which my hon. friend contends to have been so "final," as to preclude all views of farther arrangement, appears, at the very moment that it was recorded on the Journals of Parliament, to have been accompanied by a declaration of the opinion of parliament, that *something farther* was absolutely necessary.

But my hon. friend has laid great stress on the impropriety and danger of stirring such a question at a moment when Ireland is distracted and convulsed, and when the fate of the whole British empire is exposed to a crisis of the most trying and perilous nature. The House must surely remember, and my hon. friend should recollect, that for these three years past, those who are in the habit of opposing his majesty's ministers, have repeatedly been calling for inquiries into the state of affairs in Ireland, though such inquiries were not then brought within the view of the House in any regular mode, nor did they come supported by any recommendation from the throne. Nay, in the last session of parliament, it was stated as a high contempt shown to the House, that when his majesty was sending down a message to require of parliament to enable his majesty to avail himself of the offers of the English militia regiments to extend their services to Ireland, for the purpose of quelling the rebellion then raging in that country,—it was then stated as a high contempt of the House of Commons, that his majesty's message, while it required this new power from parliament, contained no account of the general state of Ireland, no detail of the rise and progress of the rebellion, no call upon parliament to inquire how the mischiefs in Ireland had been occasioned, and how they might best be cured. Gentlemen then insisted on the propriety of an inquiry into Irish affairs, and into the causes of the rebellion. Now, it seems, they have no wish for any investigation, and all their curiosity has subsided. Perhaps the proposal of such an inquiry might then be supposed to proceed from an innocent curiosity; for it may be recollected, that it was then stated in this House as a doubtful question, "Which were the rebels in Ireland?" But surely it is unfair to call for a message at one time as proper and necessary, and at another time, when it comes, to object to the moment as highly unseasonable, and not even so much as condescend to take the subject of the message into consideration.

And now, Sir, with regard to the posture of affairs in Ireland, into an examination of which, though I am not at present disposed minutely to enter, I must nevertheless place it in a very different point of view from that in which it has been pictured by my hon. friend. Has my hon. friend inquired into the state of Ireland since late events have taken place; events which are now notorious, and cannot possibly be disputed? Is it not notorious that a rebellion has existed, and that it is now checked, though, perhaps, not effectually quelled? Is it not notorious that the object of the traitorous machinations which gave rise to that rebellion, was not any partial change of men or measures, but a total subversion of the existing government and constitution of the country, and the complete destruction of all connexion between the sister kingdom and Great Britain? And, finally, is it not notorious, not only from the verdict of the Irish juries (into a comparison between the authority of whose verdict, with that of the verdicts of acquittal of English juries, so emphatically commended by my hon. friend, I will not enter, but will rather refer to other authorities, which will, perhaps, but show what authority these verdicts of acquittal can claim) authorities which can leave no doubt in the mind of any impartial man—which may, perhaps show, that legal acquittal is not always a proof of moral innocence, not only, Sir, from the verdicts of Irish juries, but from the avowals and confessions of the traitors themselves. Is it not notorious that conspiracies have existed in Ireland, which not only went to sap the foundations of the constitution in Ireland, but which were most pointedly distinguished by an attempt to effect a total separation of that country from the British empire? Conspiracies, not for Catholic emancipation—not for parliamentary reform—but for the total subversion of all government,

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and for the complete separation of the two countries. Is it then possible to know all these circumstances, and not to feel how deeply interested Great Britain is in the fate of Ireland? or, is it possible that, to avowals thus made by the self-convicted traitors, not in recantation of past errors, but with a determination to persist in them? Avowals made, not in entreaty for pardon for the evils they have done, but in regret for what they have left undone; to avowals of a design that would have laid in ashes the pride of that capital, for whose prosperity and pre-eminence such anxious alarms are now expressed; to avowals that, though their abominable schemes have been detected, they are not as yet defeated; to avowals that, though the first fruits of their labours were lost, their hope still survived that loss; to such avowals I must ask, is it possible to refuse credit? After the detection, therefore, of these deep and damned plots, is it not expedient, nay, a thing of urgent necessity, to examine into and adopt the most effectual means of counteracting the pernicious consequences that may still flow from them? consequences that not only affect the continuance of the connexion between the two countries, but which deeply strike at the prosperity and very existence of both. When such strong and obvious reasons evidently exist for entering into an investigation of these means, were that investigation even to be proposed only by a simple individual of this House, would it not have been more proper and decorous to point out some other plan that might appear equally feasible and effectual, or, at least, to hear what was the nature of the plan to be proposed, rather than pass it over with contempt? and coming, as it now does, from the highest authority, can we reject it in a manner which could scarcely be practised with regard to the most trivial and ordinary motion that could be made in this House?

I am, however, far from being disposed to deny that the conduct of my hon. friend proceeds from the dictates of true patriotism, from a sincere and anxious regard for what he conceives to be the interest of Ireland. I, Sir, though not so nearly connected with that country, still feel the most ardent zeal for its interests and happiness; but in my opinion it would have been more consistent, not only with the love which my hon. friend professes for his native country, but also more reconcileable with the duty which he owes both to that and to this country, to point out what might have escaped his majesty's ministers in their earnest endeavours to hit upon some effectual remedy for the evils that confessedly exist in Ireland, or, at least, to have waited in the first instance, to know what are the particulars of that measure, which he is so anxious the House should reject without hearing. My hon. friend and the House must surely feel with how much anxiety they ought to look towards Ireland. The object is, indeed, most important: it is not the making of a provincial regulation, not the adjusting an internal difference, not the arrangement of a plan for the balancing of parties—the object is nothing less than to secure Ireland to us and to herself, and thereby to promote the happiness and security of the whole empire.

In default, then, of any plan which my hon. friend's sagacity might devise, I must look to the collected sense of Ireland itself, and see what are the opinions on this important subject, entertained by those of that country who are acknowledged to be the most enlightened and best instructed, and who are most thoroughly acquainted with all its interests, both local and general. If these opinions were consulted and collected, I do not hesitate to assert that they will be found to favour the measure now in contemplation, and to pronounce it by far the least objectionable that could be devised; and here, Sir, I beg leave to disclaim any intention of availing myself of what my hon. friend has represented to be the ambiguous and equivocal wording of his majesty's message—and to declare plainly and fairly, that the measure, which I understand to be recommended for your consideration, is no other than an incorporating legislative union between the two kingdoms. In recommending, then, to the House to take this measure of an union into their most serious consideration, I should even be willing to put the rebellion out of the question. Rebellion can only be put down by force. But by what means are the agitations to be allayed, and the discords that rend that unhappy country to be silenced or reconciled? These party discords are well described in a pamphlet which my hon. friend has thought proper to treat with much harshness, and which he attributes to an hon. member of the Irish administration. My hon. friend has treated as absurd the arguments contained in this work that the

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Union might be advantageous in an equal degree to opposite seats, and hostile interests. For my part, Sir, I confess I can see nothing absurd in the argument. It seems to me not only possible, but highly probable that both Protestant and Catholic might gain by an arrangement which would gratify the ambition of the one, without endangering the safety of the other. That such could be the effect of an union, or rather that such is expected and acknowledged to be the probable effect of it, I am warranted in concluding by reference to the different claims and objections upon which the Catholics and Protestants stand opposed to each other at present. I prefer arguing from what each party has said for itself, to stating any opinion of my own, as to the propriety or expediency of giving or withholding what remains to be given to the Catholics, while Ireland continues separate from Great Britain. For the opinion of the Protestant party on this head, I will beg permission to quote a gentleman, a warm advocate for the Protestant ascendancy, whose book I have lately read with more pleasure and more instruction than any other that has been published upon the subject of Ireland. I speak, Sir, of the ability and ingenuity of the work. I beg to be understood as giving no opinion upon the questions argued in it. The gentleman to whom I refer, is Dr. Duigenan. This gentleman's book, in answer to Mr. Grattan, contains in my mind, the most complete statement of the causes and nature of the present distractions of Ireland. It is not only a very ingenious, but a very learned work (if that were any farther recommendation to it), it more completely demolishes his antagonist, than any controversial work that I remember ever to have read. I quote Dr. Duigenan's work with the less prejudice, as he is one of the few persons who had written upon the subject of Irish affairs of late without giving a distinct opinion for or against an union. Dr. Duigenan is well known to be decidedly hostile to the pretensions of the Catholics; he insists upon the necessity of their continued exclusion from a share in the legislature, or in any of the great offices of the state from which they are at present excluded, but confesses at the same time that that necessity of exclusion would be done away by the adoption of some plan similar to that proposed in his majesty's most gracious message. He states it as an unavoidable alternative, either that such a plan—that is, a plan of union must be adopted, or that some other must be devised for the fortification of the Protestant ascendancy. This fortification Dr. Duigenan would fain build on the reenactment of the popery code; but he admits that this would be unnecessary in case of an union between the two countries. According to him one or other of these alternatives must be adopted. Here, therefore, we have the creed of the Protestant party; it appears that they are willing to adopt an union, or in failure of it, to continue a struggle for every thing that was dear to them in rights and pre-eminence, and in religion.

Ask now the other, the Catholic party, and what is their answer? Why, "let us have a union, or a continued struggle for that which you have hitherto denied us, viz. a repeal of the remainder of the penal code." Here, then, are two parties in opposition to each other, who agree in one common opinion. And surely if any middle term can be found to assuage their animosities and to heal their discords, and reconcile their jarring interests, it should be eagerly and instantly seized and applied. That an union is that middle term, appears the more probable when we recollect that the popery code took its rise after a proposal for an union; which proposal came from Ireland, but which was rejected by the British government. This rejection produced the popery code. If an union were therefore acceded to, the readoption of the popery code would be unnecessary. If it was in consequence of the rejection of an union, at a former period that the laws against popery were enacted, it is fair to conclude, that an union would render a similar code unnecessary; that an union would satisfy the friends of the Protestant ascendancy, without passing laws against the Catholics, and without maintaining those which are yet in force. Unless, then, some plan less liable to these objections is suggested, and better calculated to remedy the existing diseases of Ireland, there is a presumption in favour of that which persons best acquainted with the interests of Ireland, and best informed respecting the contentions that now disturb its internal tranquillity, are inclined to countenance and adopt.

But then it is contended, that there is something in the present crisis which renders this an improper period to propose this measure. This surely is strange reasoning. If an union would quiet the agi-

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tation of that country, and restore it to rest, why should we wait till the struggle was over before we administer the remedy? Surely, if two combatants could be parted, it would be wrong to postpone the interference till the battle was over. Some gentlemen, indeed, are so fond of a boxing match, that they had rather see it fought out, than that the parties should be separated; but when it is recollected that the parties in this contest are two great national divisions, and that the prize they are contending for is the existence of the government and the connexion between the two countries, it surely must be a rash fondness for the sport, that would delay for a moment the plan of interference and reconciliation. What else is there in the circumstances of the present time which renders the measure improper? It cannot be that the continued efforts of France for the subjugation of Ireland have been detected and defeated;—because whatever delicacy there might exist in interfering between two national parties, there can be none in preserving Ireland from France.

It is still the avowed design of France to attempt an invasion of Ireland, and to complete a separation of it from Great Britain; and surely my hon. friend is not disposed to bar any thing that may effectually interfere between France and her intended prey? Is he for waiting till France shall fit out another fleet, and disembark another army in Ireland, to meet with the same fate that attended her former rashness and audacity, before he would endeavour to reconcile and unite all parties; and thus consolidate the interests and the resources, and the strength of the whole empire? But something is insinuated of the deliberations of Ireland being influenced and intimidated by the armed force now in the country. My hon. friend has strongly insisted upon the intimidation which the presence of that armed force is likely to impress on the public mind in Ireland. It is by promoting such an union of interests and affections, as this measure will ensure, that we may hope to remove the necessity of keeping a large armed force in Ireland; and by removing that necessity, my honourable friend would remove one of the objects of his own censure and complaint. But, in truth, the effects of that intimidation which my hon. friend so much apprehended, are not easy to discover; it surely does not seem to affect either the liberty of speech, or the liberty of the press; both of which have been pretty freely indulged in on the present subject. Every gentleman, I believe, is acquainted with the circumstance of several persons in Ireland having declared their sentiments on the subject freely, and without any appearance of being intimidated by an armed force. A very respectable gentleman in Ireland, who fills the same situation which you, Sir, fill in this country with so much credit, and so much advantage to this House and to the public, has availed himself of the opportunity of delivering those sentiments out of doors which he could not do within, in a manner that does not savour of intimidation on one side of the question at least. But God forbid that such intimidation should prevail. It is natural, indeed, that Dublin, under the influence of the first impression, and of the first ardour that has been kindled by the agitation of a question so materially involving its peculiar interests, should be warm, if not intemperate, in the expression of its sentiments. Dublin is as yet loud in its reprobation of the measure; but other places of note and celebrity in Ireland, places that stand as high in commercial importance, are on the contrary as forward in bestowing upon it their most marked and decided approbation.

There is one topic in the speech of my hon. friend which has struck me with no small surprise, and that is, the panegyric which he delivered upon the vigilance and resolution evinced by the Irish parliament in detecting the late conspiracy, and in crushing the late rebellion. Such compliments to the Irish parliament, from that side of the House, I was not prepared to expect, much less was prepared to hear that the armed force in Ireland was to be employed to overawe the proceedings of a parliament, to whose vigilance and activity co-operating with, and watching over the employment of that very force, for some months past, I am ready to say that the salvation of Ireland is to be ascribed. Is it then the parliament in Ireland that English soldiers are to coerce and restrain? A parliament fully armed with every constitutional power to control that or any other army? These, Sir, are insinuations against which I must loudly and pointedly protest. They are insinuations which, if not timely met and refuted, when they get abroad, would assume the form of broad assertions; and I should be now glad to hear if there is any man in this House, or out of it, who will take

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upon himself to assert, that the Irish parliament is to debate under the immediate intimidation of English troops? Is there a man in existence who believes, that if such an intimidation was attempted, the Irish parliament, with the powers which the constitution has vested in their hands, would proceed to discuss a question under the terror of an armed force.

But, Sir, my hon. friend wandered from the limits to which he promised to confine his observations, when he thought himself at liberty to compare the incorporation of the two legislatures, with the incorporations made by France for the farther aggrandisement of her already gigantic dominions. In what possible point of view can such a comparison be instituted between the conduct of the two countries? Does France attempt to incorporate other countries for the purpose of extending their common commercial interests? Or have the French been the authors, not of contributions and confiscations, but of means of wealth and prosperity to the incorporated countries? And have they only required of them to bear a common share in common terms, for the defence and advancement of a common cause? Do the countries which they endeavour to incorporate, resemble France in constitution and in law? Do they contain persons who speak the same language, who are attached to the same customs, who are linked together by the ties of affinity and blood? If not, where is the comparison between the state of the countries which France has chose to incorporate, and that which exists between Great Britain and Ireland? Where is the analogy between such discordant connexions, and one between two countries united already by the closest ties of friendship, by blood, by the same species of government, both obeying the same sovereign, and enjoying the same constitution?

Is there any Irish Protestant, however anxious and apprehensive of any interference on the part of Great Britain, which might shake what they considered as the only sure foundations of the Protestant ascendancy;—is there any Irish Catholic,—however galled and angry at the exclusion of his seat from parliament, and from a few offices of public trust,—however anxious for Catholic emancipation (as it is called)—who found on these, their partial grievances and general dislike to the British constitution? Have we as yet found those who would tell us, "Take away your boasted constitution? It does not speak our language; it is not congenial to our inveterate habits; it does not accord with the usual tone of our feelings?" No; none, undoubtedly, except those of whom I am loath to speak as part of the people of Ireland, the traitors, who have attempted the subversion of that constitution which we cherish, and a dissolution of that connexion on which depend the safety, the interests, the prosperity, and the existence of the two kingdoms. The most strenuous friends of reform in Ireland have frequently said, that they wanted only to be brought nearer to the perfection of England; and desired that they might enjoy the substantial blessings of the constitution; that they might be blest, not with a mock splendor under which they could neither enjoy security, nor thrive in prosperity, but the real, inspiriting, and enlivening sunshine of English liberty. Ireland, they know and feel, would indeed, be the paradise of real blessings, if British connexion could be extended there in a manner which might bring about a resemblance between the situation of the people there and in this country.

But among all these people whom the French had sucked into the vortex of their despotism, was there one who wished for the constitution offered to them? Did the people of Piedmont, for instance, tell them "We love your liberty and your constitution; let us share the blessings of both?" did they say, "We are tired of a king; give us your Five Directors—we dislike the ensigns of royalty—give us a tri-coloured cockade; we dislike our government; take away our king, his family, and those friends who have supported him, and who would have prompted him to exertion:" No; the people of Piedmont have said no such thing. Let the House but recollect what passed in Piedmont, in the last act of the dreadful tragedy the French had performed in that country—a beloved monarch, for no crime against his people (to use the cant of modern republicanism), for no breach of faith with his new allies, was ignominiously driven from his dominions, for no other reason than because the French wanted Piedmont for a retreat for their army in case it should be compelled to retreat from Italy. The unhappy monarch, as the last degradation of human infamy, was obliged *on his knees* to beg the French to let him take his brother (the duc d'Aoste) with him, whom

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the French wanted to keep as a pledge for his good conduct. Good God! to ask a pledge for his good conduct, after they had driven him from his dominions, and forced him, poor, powerless, and degraded, to seek refuge in Sardinia—to compel a sovereign who had been guilty of no offence, to God or man, to grovel on his knees, and supplicate for mercy and compassion at the bloody hands of the agents of the Directory! Let the House consider of this scene, and then let them pronounce whether, whatever be the result of this question, it was candid to treat it in such a manner, to compare the discussion of two free and independent states, upon a plan calculated for their mutual benefit, with the unprecedented tyranny of France.

In one view, indeed, Sir, the incorporations of France ought to be wholly out of our consideration. It is upon a just and founded apprehension of the designs of France upon Ireland, that his majesty has called upon the parliament of both kingdoms to devise the means of giving additional strength and solidity to that part of the empire, which at present is most open to attack, and of communicating to Ireland in the fullest manner, the power, the vigour, and the stability of Great Britain. If Ireland obviously is not in a condition to defend itself against the threatened attacks of foreign power, and consequently stands in need of the assistance of Great Britain, it is a question certainly of serious importance, whether that assistance may not be best given by an incorporation of the two countries. The measure, however, is not forced—God forbid that it should be forced—upon Ireland; but given for the consideration, for the mature and deliberate judgment of the Irish parliament, who alone are competent finally to reject or to adopt it.—Be it, however, our consolation, at least, if most unhappily for Ireland, most unhappily for the empire, the measure should not be adopted, that the British parliament has done its part towards carrying it into effect—the recommendation of the common sovereign of both countries, towards knitting together under this paternal government, the disjointed members of this mighty empire—mighty even in its present state—but when inseparably united in all its parts, likely to become invincible, if not unassailable. For we are to remember, that it is not the local or military weakness alone of Ireland that has marked her out as a prey to the arms and intrigues of our enemy. Do not let us think, that if we rescue Ireland from subjugation by those arms, and from subversion by those intrigues, by the measure at present under our contemplation, we are adopting a remedy disproportioned to the danger, or erecting permanent fortifications against an attack that is but temporary, and may be felt no more.

Much as we have been in the habit of considering the nature of the French revolution, and painfully as it has been brought home to our minds and feelings, by the experience of those tremendous calamities which have been occasioned by it throughout the nations which surround us—little, indeed have we been benefited by the experience of the sufferings of others; and imperfect, indeed, has been our considerations of their nature and extent—if we have not been taught that the moral influence of the French revolution is not likely speedily to pass away—that even if we could suppose peace to be restored to Europe, and the kingdoms whose heads have been bound by the storm, or even the states which it has torn up by the roots, to be replaced in their former political situation—even under this supposition (improbable enough God knows) the latent mischief, the principle of future convulsions in the moral and political world, would remain. Where is the country, whose state of society is more adapted to receive and cherish, and mature the principles of the French revolution—principles which go to array the physical force of the lower orders of the people, against the educated and governing parts of the community, to arm poverty against property, labour against privilege, and each class of life against its superior, than a country like Ireland, where the inhabitants are in general poor and uncivilized, and where religious distinctions prevail to such an extent? In such a country, the seeds of the French revolution must be sown deep indeed! It is not, I am afraid, the act of a day or a year which will destroy its baneful influence. The government of France know, that wherever their principles are scattered, it will be difficult to eradicate them; they know that they had taken root in Ireland. Is it not then likely that they will attempt to foster and support them? It is to put an end to those hopes of our enemies—it is to put Ireland out of danger, both from foreign attack and do-

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mestic disturbance and distraction—it is, in every point of view, to ameliorate her condition that this measure is proposed. A measure, the necessity of which, arising from the causes which I have stated, argues, however, no blame to the people, or to the government of Ireland. The fault is in the nature of things: in the present disposition of property, and division of the classes of society in that country. They want commerce, they want capital, they want a generally diffused spirit of industry and order; they want those classes of men who connect the upper and lower orders of society, and who thereby blend together and harmonize the whole. But it is not an act of parliament that would effect these great and beneficial objects; no, it is only by a connexion with a country, which has capital, which has commerce, which has that middle class of men, of whom skill and enterprise, and sober orderly habits are the peculiar characteristics; it is by such a connexion alone, diffusing these blessings, diffusing the means of wealth, and the example and encouragement of industry throughout the sister kingdom, it is by such a connexion that so great and beneficial a change must be effected. We have seen partial remedies tried—but, as might be expected, with partial success. We have seen manufactures flourish—but the cottage, which borders on the manufactory, remaining in wretchedness. There remains one great experiment to be tried. If from the concurrent testimony of opposite sects and parties, we are warranted in believing, that it may be made with advantage to all, if in addition to the immediate safety of Ireland, and the strengthening of the empire, it promise to produce in the interior of that country consequences so beneficial to its internal prosperity and happiness—Surely we have heard no arguments to-night which ought to prevent the House from entering upon a discussion of the subject.

I trust that no such arguments will prevent the subject from being discussed with the same temper, the same views, and the same anxiety to bring it to a happy conclusion in Ireland. My hon. friend has, indeed, stated, with regard to the mode of proposing this subject in Ireland, that, besides force, other means had been recurred to. Government has done that which seems to my hon. friend most alarming, most horrible—they have actually turned a gentleman out of his office. My hon. friend presses this argument very strongly, and seems to think it must have a great effect upon us who sit on this bench to talk of turning a man out of office. But what, in fact, does the whole argument amount to? Sir John Parnell, undoubtedly a man of great worth and abilities, entertained an opinion hostile to this measure. The opinion of such a man was certainly entitled to respect, but to nothing more than those of persons of equal worth and talents. What are the taunts which we hear thrown out against gentlemen on this side of the House, if there happens to be the slightest difference of opinion among them, even though it should be upon an indifferent and unimportant subject. If, Sir, the opposition in Ireland were as acute as my hon. friend, sir John Parnell would have had a pleasant time of it, if he had gone down to the House a chancellor of the exchequer, differing as he did from government upon so important a question; and would, in truth, have been an impeachment upon the sincerity of government, if they had so risked the loss of a question, on which they conceived the welfare of the two countries to depend. Sir John Parnell, therefore, ceased to be chancellor of the exchequer.

On what other circumstances then, connected with the time, or with the manner of bringing forward this proposition, is it contended that the parliament or people of Ireland should receive it with jealousy and suspicion? If, indeed, this proposition had come, after a series of attempts on the part of Great Britain, to injure and depress her sister country, to check her progress in commercial prosperity, to discourage her advances to wealth and civilization, to crush and control her legislative independence, and to over-rule all attempts at the improvement of the laws and constitution, it might justly be entertained with distrust, and proceeded upon with hesitation. If, seeing and deploring the present situation of Ireland, Great Britain had yet suggested no remedy for them herself, and had thrown difficulties in the way of what had been suggested by Ireland, and had then come forward with this as the first offer of her advice and assistance, Ireland might perhaps ask, where the spirit of benevolence had slept so long, and why she had never before experienced the anxious care of England, until it was now extended to them in the first instance, accompanied by a proposal for a union? But was that the case? Was this the first

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remedy that England had proposed, or had she ever refused assistance to Ireland? It has been said, that for the space of three hundred years we had oppressed Ireland. It is happy, however, for the present generation, that it has but little of the guilt of that oppression to answer for. Surely, for the last twenty years, the conduct of England towards Ireland has been a series of concessions. Ireland desired an octennial parliament; it was granted. They wished for an independent legislature, and their wishes were complied with. They desired a free trade, and it was given to them. A very large body of the people of Ireland prayed for a repeal of part of the penal code, which they thought oppressed them; the English government interposed, with an opinion strongly pronounced in favour of their petition, and its interference was successful.

But it has been said, that nothing has been done for Ireland but what she had extorted, and what she had a *right* to demand: these past favours, therefore, are represented as no proof of kindness. But I would ask, Sir, whether an independent country can demand to trade to the colonies of another independent country, as a matter of right? I wish to know, whether an independent country could insist upon sending her linens to this country, under advantageous circumstances, as a *right*? Whether an independent country could demand the liberty of sending her goods into this country, in order to be re-exported with English bounties, as a matter of right? It was undoubtedly proper that these advantages should be given to Ireland, because the prosperity of Ireland is the prosperity of England; but they were not privileges upon which they could insist as matters of right. But here, Sir, let me not be misapprehended: I do not say this as reproaching Ireland with the gratitude which she owes to England, but merely to show the good disposition with which England has, for a long time past, acted towards Ireland.

Sir, it is not my intention to go into any detail upon the subject of this great measure at present, nor to state the nature of the terms upon which a union may best be concluded. That statement, whenever it comes, it is fit that the House should hear from higher authority than mine. And this is by no means the stage of the business, at which it can come with effect and propriety. The object which I have in view, Sir, in what I have taken the liberty to address to the House, is to entreat them to recollect, that in adopting the amendment of my hon. friend, and refusing to go into a consideration of the address, they would put an end to the only great and comprehensive view that had ever been taken in this House of the affairs of Ireland. The plans proposed respecting Ireland, except in the case of the Irish propositions, were in general to answer some immediate purpose, to catch at a little popularity by decrying one party and extolling another; and by echoing in this country the distractions and disturbances of that, whenever it has so happened that the affairs of this country have furnished no immediate ground for popular declamation.

It is a little curious to consider what was the conduct of that party when in government towards Ireland, from whom the opposition to this measure comes. Did those gentlemen, when they had the power in their hands, take a great and comprehensive view of the state of Ireland? No; when they were proposing a measure respecting Ireland, they overlooked three-fourths of its inhabitants. It was then said by those gentlemen, that the work was done, and the troubles of Ireland appeased; and yet, in their plan, the word Catholic never once occurred. Such was the wisdom, the comprehension, the grandeur of conception, that marked the boasted final adjustment of 1782.

And now, Sir, observe the manner in which every thing that is attempted to be done for the safety of Ireland, and for the benefit of both countries, is treated—What are the weapons by which every thing that my right hon. friend proposes, with regard to Ireland is attempted to be beaten down? What are the substitutes recommended for every measure which he would take for saving and tranquilizing Ireland? Why, Catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform. How came the final adjusters not to think sixteen years ago of Catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform? With respect to the latter, the hon. gentleman, who was then minister, directed the lord lieutenant to put down that question at all events; and as to Catholic emancipation, not one word was said about it.

Sir, it is little praise of the measure now proposed for our consideration to say that it will be more perfect and comprehensive than the final adjustment of 1782.

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The question, indeed, which I conjure the House not to refuse to consider, is not a question of slight importance—it is a question upon which depends the safety of one member of the empire, and the happiness of the whole. I conjure the House to recollect, What is the hazard in which Ireland stands, and what have been our fears and our anxiety for her preservation? If in estimating the splendid victories which have illustrated the naval annals of this country, and spread through the world the terror of her fame, we have ranked even with the most brilliant those by which Ireland has been saved—let the same sentiment induce us to receive with kindness, and to discuss with a sincere desire to bring it to perfection, a measure which is calculated to perpetuate to Ireland the safety which is the fruit of these victories, and to procure to her solid and permanent blessings far beyond the power of any victories to bestow!—Sitting here as we do in tranquillity and security, protected by a powerful and energetic government, in the bosom of a consenting and united people—with no invasion to resist, no rebellion to coerce or to appease,—let us feel for the distractions and disquietudes of a country, which the ties of nature, of friendship, of common language, manners, and interests, of laws and constitutions similar to our own, bind so indissolubly to ourselves, that separation would be to each, and to both of us, destruction. And let us, at least, not refuse to consider of a question which involves in itself the best, perhaps the only means, which can at once and for ever remove the dangers, and quiet the dissensions of Ireland, while they cement the connexion which it is equally essential to both countries to strengthen.

Mr. *Jones* said, he would not follow the hon. gentleman through all the mazes and windings of his metaphorical confusion. He saw no necessity for bringing forward this measure. The rebellion in Ireland ought not to be considered as suppressed while there was a man in arms against the government: but instead of crushing the rebellion, the measure now suggested would promote the distractions of the country. The present measure possessed all the characteristics of French fraternity. The hon. gentleman had acknowledged that the Irish parliament suppressed the late rebellion—now, if it was capable of this, why disfranchise that parliament? Why say, You shall sit no longer: but you may send 100 members here? Was it likely that such a representation could manage the affairs of Ireland better than its own parliament? With respect to military coercion, he was far from supposing that troops were sent to Ireland for the purpose of over-awing the deliberations of the parliament of that country; but certainly while they were there, they might be considered as having the effect of an intimidation with regard to the people at large. Indeed, whether a union was a good or bad measure, the present was a most unfavourable moment for proposing it.

Mr. *Pitt* rose and said;—Sir; Considering the manner in which this subject has been agitated, I feel that I ought to make an apology to the House for creating any delay in the determination of a point, upon which I really think much difference of opinion cannot subsist; I mean upon the vote to be given on the question which is now before us. But as this point, clear as in itself I take it to be, is connected with others on which depends the best interest of the whole of the British empire, I must ask the indulgence of the House, while I advert to the general principle of the subject which is now before us. It is far from being my intention to do now, what indeed could not now be regularly attempted, and what hereafter it will be my duty to do—I mean to lay before this House a detailed particular of a plan, the spirit of which is only alluded to in general terms in the gracious communication from the throne; that is what I shall have the honour of doing hereafter; the matter for the discussion of the House at this moment is comprised in the original motion of my right hon. friend, and the amendment proposed by the hon. gentleman. The address proposed in answer to the message, pledges the House to nothing more than that of assuring his majesty, that you will take into your serious consideration a subject which is recommended to your care, and which is highly interesting to the welfare of the British empire. The amendment of the hon. gentleman calls upon you at once to declare, you will not deliberate upon the matter, The hon. gentleman produced one argument only in support of the conclusion he calls upon you to draw, and which he says he has established. He said, near the end of his speech, that which, if it were true, would indeed establish his conclusion. He has told you, that you have

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no legitimate power of making your deliberations effectual. He has told you without much argument, what no other person has hitherto told this House in this House, but what has been told it and the public, upon whom by the way it is intended in the first instance to operate, in pamphlets and various other publications which are daily ushed forth in this country and in Ireland, that you have no legitimate power to determine upon this measure. The hon. gentleman adopts that doctrine. He has taken upon himself to deny the right of the parliament of either kingdom to determine upon this matter. I say the right of the parliament of either, for he cannot make any distinction between the two. If the parliament of Ireland has no just power or legitimate authority without the immediate instruction, not of its constituents merely, but of the people of Ireland in the mass—I say, if the parliament of Ireland has not any legitimate authority to determine upon this subject without the instructions of the people at large, as little has the parliament of England such authority—as little had the parliament of Scotland that authority—as little had the parliament of England and Scotland that authority when they agreed upon the union between the two kingdoms—a union under which has grown up and flourished the prosperity of both; under which the laws of both have been improved; under which property has been protected; under which has been cherished a principle of cordial co-operation, which has led to the happiness of Great Britain, and has rendered it the envy, and, I trust, will make it the protection of surrounding nations. You sit in that chair, Sir—I stand here before you—the hon. gentleman himself addressed you this night, called upon this House to entertain a debate, without any right whatever; we are all totally destitute of legitimate authority, if the hon. gentleman is right in the principle he contended for this night upon this part of the subject. Indeed if he be right in that principle, you have no parliament in England possessed of legal and just authority at this hour; there is no act which you have performed for the last ninety years, however well intended, or however effectual for the happiness of the people of Great Britain that can be said to be legitimate or legal.

I know not what ideas the hon. gentleman may entertain, or what aid he expects, or what aid he will find ready to be given to his doctrine, that "parliament is not competent to the discussion of this subject." I know it leads immediately to the system of universal right of suffrage in the people; to the doctrine, that each man should have an actual share in the government of the country, by having a choice for his representative; and then goes back to the whole system of Jacobinism, which I thought had been pretty nearly exploded as soon as it came to be pretty well understood all over Europe. I say, if the hon. gentleman avows this, then, but not till then, will his argument upon this head of the subject be intelligible and consistent; for without this, the whole of what he said upon the matter will be quite obscure, if not altogether without a meaning. The hon. gentleman, I believe, is not in his heart any advocate for any such doctrine; and yet to this length his argument leads, or there is an end of that part of the topic he brought before you. If you deny the competence of parliament which fully and freely represents all the people of this country, (and here let it be remembered that I am using no language of my own, but am following the approved language of our ancestors), there is an end of all your authority, not in this point only, but in every other point. Now, let us see how this will apply to the argument of the hon. gentleman in the rest of his speech to-night. He complains that a question is agitated, and an address is moved upon this subject. The address is moved, as I said yesterday in this House it was intended to be moved, and it involves a question upon which I thought there would be no opposition.—Why? Because the detail of the matter would not now be brought forward. That is reserved for another opportunity; and however necessary the measure may be, and I am convinced it is, yet I know it has, and must have its difficulties. I know it is liable, necessarily liable, to a thousand difficulties, because subject to a thousand prejudices and partial objections; to sentiments hastily conceived by some, and eagerly adopted by others, to local and confined views, to personal affections, and to a multitude of impediments, which, however firm our own opinions may be of the indispensable necessity of the measure for the happiness, and even the security of the British empire, yet have induced his majesty's ministers not to enter upon the detail at this moment. Upon these topics,

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therefore, I shall decline for the present entering upon any explanation. But although I do not think it right to detail the subject at this moment, and although I may have that honour at another time, yet I must say that the hon. gentleman's complaint against surprise is extremely ill founded. I think that if any complaint could fairly be urged against us upon that subject, it would be that we have shown perhaps too much caution against surprise; and although (for the reasons I have alleged already) I shall decline at present entering upon any detail of the plan which is intended to be submitted to parliament, I must be allowed to answer the objections of the hon. gentleman. Here then let me again observe, that after a message comes from the throne, recommending in substance an union between the two kingdoms, nothing in the first instance is proposed but a general address, pledging the House to nothing more than that it will take the subject into serious consideration. A day is stated, on which the outline of the plan to be submitted to parliament is to be opened, that is the general principle of the measure. The discussion is further to be postponed, nor is it proposed that parliament shall be called upon to determine upon it until after due time has been taken for ample deliberation. I should have thought the hon. gentleman himself would have at least allowed there was candour and fairness in the mode of the proceeding.

If, therefore, the case be as I state it—if his majesty has recommended the subject to your deliberation—if the address contains only a pledge that you will deliberate, the short question is—Should you now adopt the mode which those who have the honour of serving his majesty presume to recommend to you gravely, and on which time will be given to deliberate on all its parts; or should you pronounce, in the first instance, without examination, that it is a measure wholly unnecessary, or so dangerous, or impracticable, or so attended with evils, that you will not even so much as inquire into its contents, that you will at once shut the door against it? The hon. gentleman seems to think so. It is not enough for us to say we shall bring forward a proposition, involving in it the happiness of the whole of the British empire, including points requiring great attention, upon which we do not desire your immediate decision, but we desire you to tell the throne, in answer to its gracious communication, that you will consider the subject. The hon. gentleman says, No! you shall enter upon no inquiry upon the matter; I know enough of it already to convince you that you ought to reject it at once. If that be the proposition of the hon. gentleman, and so it is, I conceive that he is bound to make out that proposition to your satisfaction, in which case I conceive he is called upon to prove, either that the present state of Ireland is such that it requires no remedy whatever, or that if it does require a remedy, a better may be proposed than any which has a union for its basis, or that a union, at all events, must be such an evil that you ought not to deliberate upon it at all. This may be the opinion of the hon. gentleman, but has he stated any thing to make out the propriety of that opinion? For many years past I have heard from that hon. gentleman and his friends upon the affairs of Ireland nothing but complaints and lamentations. They have been in the constant habit of declaiming, sometimes upon the unjust and cruel, at other times upon the inefficient and defective system by which Ireland not only has been governed by the executive, but also by the deliberative powers of the country. We have often been reminded of the unfortunate distraction of all its parts of government, and of the evils which have resulted from the whole collectively; nay we have been told, and that pretty confidently from a gentleman who usually took the lead on the other side of this House, that the system by which Ireland was governed was radically defective; that indeed it was so full of deformity in its very constitution, as that, if we wished to answer the cavils of those who disputed the beauty of the constitution of Great Britain, we could not do better than desire them to look at her sister, who was so ugly, that when she was beheld, all objections, against the other would vanish. I remember these things full well, Sir, and I know not how the hon. gentleman has forgotten them, and how he comes now to see none of these defects. How he comes all at once to be satisfied that this was an unjust picture of Ireland: how he comes to be all at once satisfied, that Ireland is as secure as she had need to be; that her government wants no remedy—is not for me, but for him to explain to this House. The novelty of his praise of the parliament of Ireland is not to be suspected

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by me as an insincere compliment. He has certainly seen that parliament do much that deserved praise, but he has not seen enough to enable him to prove that the happiness of that country is perfectly secure; he has not seen enough to prove that there has not lately been there a desperate rebellion; he has not seen enough to prove that this House should conclude that the safety of that part of the British empire is at this moment perfectly secure; he has not seen enough to enable him to prove that there exist not at this hour in Ireland evils which we all deplore, and which we have much more reason to deplore than we had those which he has so repeatedly, and so vehemently, in conjunction with others, called to the attention of this House—I say the evils to which Ireland is at this moment exposed, and the still greater evils to which it may hereafter be exposed, if the wisdom of the legislature of the two countries does not prevent it. I say that Ireland is subject to great and deplorable evils, which have a deep root, for they lie in the situation of the country itself—in the present character, manners and habits of its inhabitants—in their want of intelligence, or, in other words, their ignorance—in the unavoidable separation between certain classes—in the state of property—in its religious distinctions—in the rancour which bigotry engenders and superstition rears and cherishes.

The hon. gentleman tells us these are evils which cannot be cured in a moment. I know they cannot, Sir, but the question is, whether we should not adopt some plan which may lead to that cure in the course of time? If indeed it could have been done by what that hon. gentleman and his friends have often recommended in this House, by what they call a catholic emancipation and a parliamentary reform, the task would have been a good deal easier than in truth it is; but catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform is a phrase made use of by some to cover designs of a very different nature. If such an object could be kept in view and be attained by calm, dispassionate, sober investigation, no man would be readier than myself to assent to any measure for that purpose. But if the state of society is such, that laws, however wise in themselves, will be ineffectual as to their object until the manners and customs of the people are altered—if men are in a state of poverty in which it is impossible they can have any comfort—if the progress of civilization depends in a great measure upon the distribution of wealth—if the improvement of that wealth depends much upon the distribution of capital—if all the advantages to be derived from an increase of national wealth depend much upon the temper of the inhabitants—if those advantages, together with the still greater advantage of mental improvement, are all retarded by the distractions and divisions of party, by the blind zeal and phrenzy of religious prejudices, by old and furious family feuds—if all, I say, combine to make a country wretched, what is the remedy? An impartial legislature standing aloof from local party connexion, sufficiently removed from the influence of contending factions to be advocate or champion of neither—being so placed as to have no superstitious reverence for the names and prejudices of ancient families, who have so long enjoyed the exclusive monopolies of certain public patronages and property, which custom has sanctioned, and which modern necessity may justify—a legislature who will neither give way to the haughty pretensions of a few, nor open the door to popular inroads, to clamour, or to invasion of all sacred forms and regularities, under the false and imposing colours of philosophical improvement in the art of government. This is the thing that is wanted for Ireland. Where is it to be found? In that country, where the evils which I have enumerated exist, or in this? That is to say, where should that legislature deliberate? In a place where the utmost effort of what is called patriotism amounts to nothing more than an aim at temporary popularity, as is evident from what has happened; or in a place where the discussion is calm and temperate? Certainly the latter, that is, in England. To neglect to establish such a legislature, when it is possible to do so, I say is an imprudence which nothing can justify. I say also, that much of the evil which Ireland now labours under, arises unavoidably from the condition of the parliament of that country.

One point at which I have just hinted, is the want of introduction of capital into that country. How can that be removed? By connexion and intercourse with Great Britain, which will improve the temper and manners, as well as the understandings of the people of Ireland: by a parliament that shall have no jealousies from

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local prejudices; this can only be the case when a parliament deliberates in England, and that, too, upon the interest of both countries united. I say it is upon this, and this only, that the happiness of the people of that country depends, and I say too, that upon this view of the subject, the hon. gentleman, instead of opposing, should be led to support the measure before us, as being peculiarly adapted to meet evils, of which he as well as many of his friends have frequently complained. But he has not scrupled to tell us that he is astonished to hear, for the first time, that the final adjustment, as he calls it, which was made in the year 1782, has been found incompetent to the blessings it was intended to convey. What were the objects which were then in view? The independence of the legislature of that country most certainly; but I beg leave to add, that there was a resolution entered into in the Irish parliament, the substance of which is,—that the interests of Great Britain and Ireland are inseparable, that the connexion ought to be founded on a permanent and solid basis, and that Ireland would adopt such measures as should be consistent with its own internal tranquillity, for which its situation fits it, and as may be connected with the strength and stability of the whole of the British empire. [Here Mr. Pitt moved, that the entry in the Journal of the House, of the 1st of May 1782, of the Copy of the Message to the Houses of Lords and Commons in Ireland, from his grace the lord lieutenant, delivered the 16th April 1782: and also, of the Copy of a Resolution of the House of Lords in Ireland, 17° die Aprilis 1782: and also, of the Copy of a Resolution of the House of Commons in Ireland, 16° die Aprilis 1782, which were presented to the House upon the said 1st of May by Mr. Secretary Fox, by his majesty's command, might be read. And the same was read accordingly. Mr. Pitt also moved, That the Resolutions which, upon the 17th of May 1782, were reported from the committee of the whole House, to whom it was referred to consider of his majesty's most gracious message of the 9th of April 1782, relative to the state of Ireland, and were then agreed to by the House, might be read. And the same were, as agreed to by the House, read accordingly; and are as followeth: viz. 1. "Resolved, *nem. con.* That an act, made in the 6th year of the reign of George 1st, intituled, 'An act for the 'better securing the dependency of the 'kingdom of Ireland upon the crown of 'Great Britain,' ought to be repealed. 2. That it is indispensable to the interests and happiness of both kingdoms, that the connexion between them should be established, by mutual consent, upon a solid and permanent basis."] Here, then, is a proof that something was left to be done after the legislature of Ireland gained its independence. This resolution was carried to the throne, but nothing was ever done upon it. What am I now proposing for the sake of Ireland? I am not content that Ireland shall have some benefits as part of the British empire; but I am proposing, that Ireland shall be allowed to participate of the blessings which at present England enjoys.

It was said by the hon. gentleman, that this country had oppressed Ireland for 300 years: that is not a point to which I assent: but I will say, that for 100 years this country has followed a very narrow policy with regard to that country. It manifested a very absurd jealousy concerning the growth, produce, and manufacture of several articles—I say that these jealousies will be buried by the plan which is now to be brought before you. I say that when you have two independent parliaments in one empire, you have no security for a continuance of their harmony and cordial co-operation. We all have in our mouths a sentence, that every good Englishman and good Irishman feels —We must stand or fall together—we should live and die together; and yet without such a measure as that which is about to be proposed to you, there can be no security for the continuance of that sentiment. I say the happiness of both countries ought to be perpetual; as it stands now, it is liable to a thousand accidents; it depends now upon the violence of the moment; it may be governed as I have said already, upon views of temporary popularity, or upon the personal convenience of a few individuals, a tenure upon which the happiness of a nationn ought never to depend. I am not stating these things without foundation, but am referring to what was done by two champions of parties in that country and in this, the one of whom (Mr. Grattan) had a large pecuniary reward for his labours, and the other (Mr. Fox) was the subject of great panegyric in that country and in this. They were satisfied when the legislature of Ireland was declared indepen-

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dent of this country. True it is, that the parliament of that country was declared independent of this. It had what was supposed to be, sovereign power; it has the power of dictating to the executive authority upon the questions of war and peace, in the same controlling manner as the parliament of this country has: but what security is there that they will both agree upon all questions hereafter, in which the general interest of the British empire is involved? It is a difficult thing to suppose a case in which they may clash, and become perhaps as hostile to one another as any two independent bodies politic in Europe? I have no difficulty in saying that such a case might possibly happen, nor do I think that much was gained by the declaration of the independence of that parliament, or ever will be gained to the British empire, until there is some security that both legislatures will go on harmoniously together upon all questions in which the general interests of the British empire are involved. Neither do I much admire the philosophy of that person who thinks he has completed a beautiful new fabric when he has only completed the destruction of an old one; who calls that destruction "the most stupendous fabric of human wisdom that ever was exhibited to the world." When I find such a man, after the act was passed which declared the independence of the Irish parliament, assenting to the principle of a resolution of a committee, stating that the connexion between the two countries should be established by mutual consent on a solid and permanent basis, and when I find that such a resolution was carried to the throne, as I have said already, and when I reflect that nothing was afterwards done upon that resolution to carry it into effect, I have the authority of that person and his friends, that what was done in declaring the parliament of Ireland independent, was defective in a point which is indispensable for the happiness of the people of Ireland, and indeed of both countries. I think then I may say that the onus is upon those who oppose the measure now before us to show its bad tendency, rather than upon us to show its probable good effect, for their own conduct proclaims the absolute necessity of something being done; it is incumbent upon all those who took a part in the discussion of that subject, and who approved of the measure—the childish measure of the independence of the parliament of Ireland—without any security that the parliament of that country and of this would never differ essentially upon any point in which the happiness of the British empire may be involved, to show it, and upon the hon. gentleman who moved this amendment, as much as any one, for he took an active share in the parliamentary proceedings to which I have just alluded.

How stands the case in point of experience? Is there a probability, or is there not, that the parliaments of the two countries may differ upon a point that may be essentially interesting to the British empire? I say you have a guide upon that subject. You may profit by experience—I mean by the case of the regency. The hon. gentleman says that there was no difference between the two parliaments as to the regent. Why, no, Sir, there was no difference as to the person who was to be regent; but there was an essential difference as to the principle on which that person was to be regent: the Irish parliament decided on one principle, the English parliament on another, and their having agreed on the person was accidental; and upon the distinct principles on which the two parliaments proceeded, they might as well have differed upon the person who was to be, as on the powers to be granted to, the regent. Now let any man tell me that this is not an instance of an essential difference upon a point that was essential to the welfare of the British empire: and let any man show me what security there is that an essential difference upon some other object may not hereafter occur between the two parliaments. That they have not hitherto differed in the great and momentous events which have been agitated before parliament, is a good fortune which has arisen from one general cause, that of all descriptions of persons having united against one common enemy, with the exception only of a few, whose counsels, happily for both countries, and for the civilized part of the world, have lost all their influence. But will any man tell me, that such difference as was manifested in the time of the regency will never occur again? Will any man tell me, when we come to treat for peace, for instance, or to consider any subject of alliance with any foreign power, or upon any question of trade or commerce, that then the local prejudices, I say prejudices for they have great influence, may not occasion a dif-

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ference between the legislatures upon points that may be essential to the welfare of the British empire? No matter what the cause of the difference may be, it is enough that there may be such a difference. A party in England may give to the throne one species of advice by its parliament; a party in Ireland may advise directly opposite, upon the most essential points that involve the safety of both—upon alliance with a foreign power, for instance; upon the army; upon the navy; upon any branch of the public service; upon trade; upon commerce; or, upon any point that might be essential to the empire at large. Let any man tell me, what would have been the consequence to both England and Ireland, had the dissensions in Ireland been the same in point of force against the executive government in parliament, since the commencement of the present war, as they were at the time the Irish propositions were rejected? Had these men who were at the head of opposition either in that country or in this, possessed the confidence of any considerable part of the public, will any man tell me, that any minister would have been able to save this country or Ireland from destruction? But happily for us, happily for every part of the civilized world, the iniquity of the common enemy united us all; else all the evils which I have already stated, together with the poison of Jacobinism, would have come upon us, and such a complication would have soon completed the ruin of our empire: but fortunately, I say, the counsels of those who favoured such principles were rejected with disdain by the good sense of mankind at large. But when that cement by which the two legislatures have been held together, shall cease to operate, what security is there for the continuance of cordial co-operation? None whatever: the probability of its continuance is more than doubtful; for I do say, for the reasons I have alleged already, that the present state of society in Ireland, as well as its representation, which partakes of the nature of that society, is radically defective.

I am aware, Sir, that I have spoken at a greater length on this subject than might have been expected in its present stage. I have thought a great deal upon this subject, and what I have said has been nothing but the result of my own observations. I am bound to convey to this House every information which it may be in my power to give; but however acceptable to the one or to the other side of the House, however acceptable or otherwise to those whom I respect on the other side the water, my sentiments upon this subject may be, my duty compels me to speak them freely. I see the case so plainly, and I feel it so strongly, that there is no circumstance of apparent or probable difficulty, no apprehension of popularity, no fear of toil or labour, that shall prevent me from using every exertion which remains in my power to accomplish the work that is now before us, and on which I am persuaded depend the internal tranquillity of Ireland, the interest of the British empire at large, and, I hope, I may add, the happiness of a great part of the habitable world.

The Amendment was negatived without a division, and the motion for the Address was then put and carried.*

Jan. 31. The order of the day being read for taking into farther consideration his Majesty's Message of the 22nd instant,

Mr. *Pitt* rose, and spoke as follows:—Sir; When I proposed to this House, the last time this subject was before them, to fix this day for the further consideration of his majesty's message, I certainly indulged the hope that the result of a similar communication to the parliament of Ireland, would have opened a more favourable prospect than at present exists, of the speedy accomplishment of a measure which I then stated, and which I still consider to be of the greatest importance to the power, the stability, and the general welfare of the empire; to the immediate interests of both kingdoms, and more particularly to the peace, the tranquillity, and the safety of Ireland: in this hope, I am sorry to say, I have for the present been disappointed, by the proceedings of the Irish House of Commons, of which we have been informed since this subject was last under consideration.

I feel and know that the parliament of Ireland possesses the power, the entire competence, on the behalf of that country, alike to accept or reject a proposition of this nature—a power which I am by no means inclined to dispute. I see that at the present moment one House of parliament in Ireland has expressed a repug-

* A few days after this debate took place, intelligence was received by the British government, that the proposal for a Union, which had been laid before the Irish parliament, had been rejected.

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nance even to the consideration of this measure. Feeling, Sir, as I have already stated, that it is important, not only as it tends to the general prosperity of the empire of Great Britain, but (what, under every situation, must always be to me an object of the greatest moment); feeling that it was designed and calculated to increase the prosperity and ensure the safety of Ireland, I must have seen with the deepest regret, that, at the very first moment, and before the nature of the measure could be known, it was so received.

But whatever may have been my feelings upon this subject, knowing that it is the undoubted right of the legislature of Ireland to reject or to adopt such measures as may appear to them injurious or beneficial, far be it from me to speak of its determination in any other terms but those of respect. Let it not, therefore, be imagined that I am inclined to press any sentiment, however calculated it may appear to me to benefit every member of the empire, in any manner which may lead to hostile discussion between two kingdoms, whose mutual happiness and safety depend upon their being strictly and cordially united. But while I admit and respect the rights of the parliament of Ireland, I feel that, as a member of the parliament of Great Britain, I also have a right to exercise, and a duty to perform. That duty is, to express, as distinctly as I can, the general nature and outline of the plan which, in my conscience, I think would tend in the strongest manner to ensure the safety and the happiness of both kingdoms.

While I feel, therefore, that as long as the House of Commons of Ireland view the subject in the light they do at present, there is no chance of its adoption, I do not think that I ought on that account to abstain from submitting it to the consideration of this parliament; on the contrary, I think it only the more necessary to explain distinctly the principles of the measure, and to state the grounds upon which it appears to me to be entitled to the approbation of the legislature.

If parliament when it is in possession of the basis upon which this plan is founded, and of its general outline, should be of opinion with me, that it is founded upon fair, just, and equitable principles, calculated to produce mutual advantages to the two kingdoms—if parliament, I say, upon full explanation, and after mature deliberation, should be of that opinion, I should propose that its determination should remain recorded as that by which the parliament of Great Britain is ready to abide, leaving to the legislature of Ireland to reject or to adopt it hereafter, upon a full consideration of the subject.

There is no man who will deny, that, in a great question of this nature, involving in it objects which, in the first instance, are more likely to be decided upon by passion than by judgment;—in a question in which an honest, but, I must be allowed to say, a mistaken sense of national pride is so likely to operate, much misconstruction and misconception must inevitably happen. It therefore becomes the more necessary that the intentions of the government which proposes the measure, and the principles of the measure itself, should be distinctly understood. But, Sir, in stating that intention and those principles, I look to something more than a mere vindication of government for having proposed the measure. I do entertain a confidence, even under the apparent discouragement of the opinion expressed by the Irish House of Commons, that this measure is founded upon such clear, such demonstrable grounds of utility, is so calculated to add to the strength and power of the empire (in which the safety of Ireland is included, and from which it never can be separated), and is attended with so many advantages to Ireland in particular, that all that can be necessary for its ultimate adoption is, that it should be stated distinctly, temperately, and fully and, that it should be left to the unprejudiced, the dispassionate, the sober judgment of the parliament of Ireland. I wish that those whose interests are involved in this measure, should have time for its consideration—I wish that time should be given to the landed, to the mercantile, and manufacturing interest, that they should look at it in all its bearings, and that they should coolly examine and sift the popular arguments by which it has been opposed, and that then they should give their deliberate and final judgment.

I am the more encouraged in this hope of the ultimate success of this measure, when I see, notwithstanding all the prejudices which it has excited, that barely more than one half of the members that attended the House of Commons were adverse to it; and that in the other House of parliament in Ireland, containing, as it

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does, so large a portion of the property of that kingdom, it was approved of by a large majority. When I have reason to believe, that the sentiments of a large part of the people of that country are favourable to it, and that much of the manufacturing and of the commercial interest of Ireland, are already sensible how much it is calculated to promote their advantage, I think when it is more deliberately examined, and when it is seen in what temper it is here proposed and discussed, that it will still terminate in that which can alone be a fortunate result.

It would be vain indeed to hope that a proposition upon which prejudices are so likely to operate, and which is so liable to misconception, should be unanimously approved. But the approbation I hope for is, that of the parliament of Ireland, and of the intelligent part of the public of that country. It is with a view to this object that I think it my duty to bring this measure forward at present; not for the sake of urging its immediate adoption, but that it may be known and recorded; that the intention of the British parliament may be known, in the hope that it will produce similar sentiments among our countrymen in Ireland, With this view, it is my intention not to go at present into any detailed statement of the plan, because, should it ultimately be adopted, the minuter parts must necessarily become the objects of much distinct discussion; but to give such a general statement of the nature of the measure, as will enable the House to form a correct judgment upon it.

I shall therefore, Sir, before I sit down, open to the House a string of resolutions, comprising the general heads of this plan. It will be necessary for me, for the purpose of discussing those resolutions with regularity and convenience, to move that the House should resolve itself into a committee. And I have already stated, that it is not my intention then to press the committee to come to an immediate decision upon the resolutions; but if, upon full and deliberate examination, the resolutions which I shall have the honour to propose and which contain as much as is necessary for an outline of the plan, shall be approved, my opinion is, that nothing can contribute more to obviate any doubts and dissatisfaction which may exist, then that parliament should adopt those resolutions, and that it should then humbly lay them at the foot of the throne, leaving it to his majesty's wisdom to communicate them to the parliament of Ireland, whenever circumstances should appear favourable to such a measure. I shall therefore, Sir, proceed as shortly as I can to state to the House the nature of the resolutions, and of the address which I shall propose to accompany them, if it should be the pleasure of the House to adopt them.

Having now, Sir, explained to the House the mode I mean to pursue, and my reasons for persisting, under the present circumstances, in submitting this measure to the consideration of parliament, I will endeavour to state the general grounds on which it rests, the general arguments by which it is recommended, and to give a short view of the outline of the plan.

As to the general principle upon which the whole of this measure is founded, I am happy to observe, from what passed upon a former occasion, that there is not a probability of any difference of opinion. The general principle, to which both sides of the House perfectly acceded, is, that a perpetual connexion between Great Britain and Ireland is essential to the interests of both. The only hon. gentleman who, when this subject was before the House on a former day, opposed the consideration of the plan altogether, stated, in terms as strong as I could wish, the necessity of preserving the strictest connexion between the two countries. I most cordially agree with him in that opinion; but I then stated, that I do not barely wish for the maintenance of that connexion, as tending to add to the general strength of the empire, but I wish for the maintenance of it with a peculiar regard to the local interests of Ireland, with a regard to every thing that can give to Ireland its due weight and importance, as a great member of the empire. I wish for it with a view of giving to that country the means of improving all its great natural resources, and of giving it a full participation of all those blessings which this country so eminently enjoys.

Considering the subject in this point of view, and assuming it as a proposition not to be controverted, that it is the duty of those who wish to promote the interest and prosperity of both countries, to maintain the strongest connexion between them, let me ask, what is the situation of affairs that has called us to the discussion of this subject? This very connexion, the necessity of which has been admitted on all hands, has been attacked by foreign

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enemies, and by domestic traitors. The dissolution of this connexion is the great object of the hostility of the common enemies of both countries; it is almost the only remaining hope with which they now continue the contest. Baffled and defeated as they have hitherto been, they still retain the hope, they are still meditating attempts, to dissolve that connexion. In how many instances already the defeat of their hostile designs has been turned to the confirmation of our strength and security, I need not enumerate. God grant that in this instance the same favour of Divine Providence, which has in so many instances protected this empire, may again interpose in our favour, and that the attempts of the enemy to separate the two countries, may tend ultimately to knit them more closely together, to strengthen a connexion, the best pledge for the happiness of both, and so add to that power which forms the chief barrier to the civilized world, against the destructive principles, the dangerous projects, and the unexampled usurpation of France! This connexion has been attacked, not only by the avowed enemies of both countries, but by internal treason, acting in concert with the designs of the enemy—internal treason, which ingrafted Jacobinism on those diseases which necessarily grew out of the state and condition of Ireland.

Thinking, then, as we all must think, that a close connexion with Ireland is essential to the interests of both countries, and seeing how much this connexion is attacked, let it not be insinuated that it is unnecessary, much less improper, at this arduous and important crisis, to see whether some new arrangements, some fundamental regulations, are not necessary, to guard against the threatened danger. The foreign and domestic enemies of these kingdoms have shown, that they think this the vulnerable point in which we may be most successfully attacked: let us derive advantage, if we can, from the hostility of our enemies; let us profit by the designs of those, who, if their conduct displays no true wisdom, at least possess in an eminent degree that species of wisdom, which is calculated for the promotion of mischief. They know upon what footing that connexion rests at this moment between the two countries, and they feel the most ardent hope, that the two parliaments will be infatuated enough not to render their designs abortive, by fixing that connexion upon a more solid basis.

These circumstances, I am sure, will not be denied; and if upon other grounds we had any doubt, these circumstances alone ought to induce us, deliberately and dispassionately, to review the situation of the two countries, and to endeavour to find out a proper remedy for an evil, the existence of which is but too apparent. It requires but a moment's reflexion, for any man who has marked the progress of events, to decide upon the true state and character of this connexion. It is evidently one which does not afford that security which, even in times less dangerous and less critical than the present, would have been necessary, to enable the empire to avail itself of its strength and its resources.

When I last addressed the House on this subject, I stated that the settlement, which was made in 1782, so far from deserving the name of a final adjustment, was one that left the connexion between Great Britain and Ireland exposed to all the attacks of party, and all the effects of accident. That settlement consisted in the demolition of the system which before held the two countries together. Let me not be understood as expressing any regret at the termination of that system. I disapproved of it, because I thought it was one unworthy the liberality of Great Britain, and injurious to the interests of Ireland. But to call that a system in itself, to call that a glorious fabric of human wisdom, which is no more than the mere demolition of another system, is a perversion of terms, which, however prevalent of late, can only be the effect of gross misconception, or of great hypocrisy.

We boast that we have done every thing, when we have merely destroyed all that before existed, without substituting any thing in its place. Such was the *final adjustment* of 1782; and I can prove it to be so, not only from the plainest reasoning, but I can prove it by the opinion expressed by the British parliament at that very time. I can prove it by the opinion expressed by those very ministers by whom it was proposed and conducted. I can prove it by the opinion of that very government who boast of having effected a final adjustment. I refer for what I have said to proofs which they will find it very difficult to answer—I mean their own acts, which will plainly show that they were of opinion that a new system would be necessary.

But, Sir, I will go farther—I will also

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produce the authority of one of those whose influence, on the present occasion, has been peculiarly exerted to prevent the discussion of the question in Ireland; of one, of whom I do not wish to speak but with respect, but for whom, nevertheless, I should convey an idea of more respect than I can now feel to be due to him, if I were merely to describe him as the person who fills the same situation, in the House of Commons of Ireland, which you, Sir, hold among us, and which, on all occasions, *you* discharge the duties with a dignity and impartiality which reflects so much credit on yourself, and so well supports the character and authority of the House.

On a former night, I read an extract from the Journals, to show what was the opinion even of those by whom the final adjustment was proposed on that measure. It would there appear, that the message was sent to the parliament of Ireland, recommending to them the adoption of some plan for a final adjustment between the two countries, and wishing to know what were the grounds of the grievances of which they complained. In answer to this message, the parliament of Ireland stated certain grievances, the principal of which was, the power claimed by the parliament of Great Britain of making laws to bind Ireland; but, with respect to that part of the message which related to the propriety of adopting some measures for a final adjustment between the two countries, they were wholly silent. This address was laid before the parliament of Great Britain, to whom a similar message had been previously sent, and on that ground was moved the repeal of what was called the Declaratory act; which motion was assented to by the British parliament. This satisfaction was complete in Ireland, as far as related to the grievance of which her parliament had complained, viz. the power of the British parliament of making laws for Ireland, because, by the repeal of the Declaratory act, that power was given up. But so far was the minister of that day from considering that the repeal of that law finally terminated all differences, and established the connexion between the two countries upon a solid basis, that he thought it necessary to move that a farther settlement was indispensable for the maintenance of that connexion. [Mr. Sheridan, across the table, desired that that part of the Journals to which Mr. Pitt alluded, might be read.] Sir, I have stated the substance of the Journals correctly; they were read on a former night, and the hon. gentleman may, if he chooses, have them read again; if he does, he will find that they fully justify the statement I have made; but I beg that at present I may not be interrupted. I do maintain, that, upon a reference to the Journals of the period to which I have alluded, it will appear that a farther agreement between Great Britain and Ireland is there stated, in the opinion of the administration of the day, to be absolutely necessary.

I beg farther to state, that after the motion for the bill, of which so much has been said, was passed, an address to his majesty was moved and carried, praying him to take such farther measures as to him seemed proper, to strengthen the connexion between the two countries. His majesty's most gracious answer, stating that, in compliance with the address, he would immediately take such measures as might be necessary for that purpose, was delivered to the House by an hon. gentleman (Mr. Fox), who then filled the office of secretary of state, and whom we have not lately seen in the House, though he still continues to be a member of it. I do assert, without the least fear of contradiction from any gentleman whatever, that it was in the contemplation of the government of that day, to adopt some measures of the nature alluded to in the address; since that period, however, no such measure has been taken. I do also maintain, that that very system which by these very ministers who brought it forward was found to be imperfect, even for the purpose of maintaining the connexion between the two countries, remains at this moment in the same imperfect state. It leaves the two countries with separate and independent legislatures, connected only with this tie, that the third estate in both countries is the same—that the executive government is the same—that the crown exercises its power of assenting to Irish acts of parliament, under the great seal of Great Britain, and by the advice of British ministers.

This is the only principle of connexion which is left by the final adjustment of 1782. Whether this is a sufficient tie to unite them in time of peace; whether in time of war it is sufficient to consolidate their strength against a common enemy; whether it is sufficient

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to guard against those local jealousies which must necessarily sometimes exist between countries so connected; whether it is calculated to give to Ireland all the important, commercial and political advantages which she would derive from a closer connexion with Great Britain; whether it can give to both nations that degree of strength and prosperity which must be the result of such a measure as the present, I believe needs only to be stated to be decided.

But I have already said, that I have, upon this point, the authority of an opinion to which I before alluded—an opinion delivered upon a very important measure very soon after the final adjustment of 1782. The measure to which I refer, was that of the commercial propositions which were brought forward in 1785. I am not now going to enter into a discussion of the merits of that measure. The best, perhaps, that can be said of it is, that it went as far as circumstances would then permit, to draw the two countries to a closer connexion. But those who think that the adjustment of 1782 was final, and that it contained all that was necessary for the establishment of the connexion between the two countries upon a firm basis, can hardly contend that the commercial propositions of 1785 were necessary to prevent the danger of separation between the two countries, and to prevent the conflicting operation of independent legislatures. Yet, if I am not mistaken, there will be found, upon a reference to better records than those in which parliamentary debates are usually stated (I mean a statement of what passed in the discussion upon those propositions fourteen years ago, made, as I have understood, by some of the principal parties themselves), that the chancellor of the exchequer of that day in Ireland (Mr. Foster), in a debate upon the Irish propositions, held this language:—"If this infatuated country gives up the present offer, she may look for it again in vain." Here the right hon. gentleman was happily mistaken; Ireland has again had the offer of the same advantages, but more complete, and in all respects better calculated to attain their object; and this offer the right hon. gentleman has exerted all his influence to reject. But he goes on to say—"*things cannot remain as they are*—Commercial jealousy is roused—it will increase with *two independent legislatures*—and without an united interest in commerce, in a commercial empire, political union will receive many shocks, and *separation of interest* must threaten *separation of connexion*, which every *honest Irishman* must shudder to look at, as a possible event."

Gentlemen will have the goodness to observe, that I am not now quoting these expressions as pledges given by that right hon. gentleman that he would support a proposal for a union between the two countries; but I am adducing them to prove, that the situation of the two countries after the final adjustment of 1782 was such, in his opinion, as led to the danger of a separation between them. I am not now arguing, that a legislative union is the only measure which can possibly be adopted; but I am contending, that the adjustment of 1782 was never considered as final, by those who now state it to be so, as an argument against the consideration of the present measure. How the hon. gentleman on the other side of the House will evade this authority I do not know—an authority too, which, I must observe, he seems much more inclined to treat with respect than he was formerly.

But, Sir, it does not stop there. What is the evil to which he alludes? Commercial jealousies between two countries acting upon the laws of two independent legislatures, and the danger of those legislatures acting in opposition to each other. How can this evil be remedied? By two means only; either by some compact entered into by the legislatures of the two countries respecting the mode of forming their commercial regulations, or else by blending the two legislatures together; these are the only two means. I defy the wit of man to point out a third. The mode of compact was proposed in 1785; but unfortunately, in spite of that right hon. gentleman's eloquence and authority, who then stated the importance of guarding against the evil, it so happened that doctrines, derived chiefly from this side of the water, succeeded in convincing the parliament of Ireland, that it would be inconsistent with their independence, to enter into any compact whatever. We have then the authority of that right hon. gentleman to whom I have so often alluded, that the unsettled state in which the matter was left, would give "political union many shocks, and lead to a separation of connexion." The experiment of a mutual compact has been tried without success; the arrangement of that sort,

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which was proposed in 1785, in order to obviate the inconveniences stated by the right hon. gentleman, was then attacked with the same success against his authority as another and more effectual remedy has recently experienced under his auspices. The result then is, you must remain in the state which that right hon. gentleman has described, with the seeds of separation in the system now established, and with the connexion on which the mutual prosperity of both countries depends, in danger of being hourly dissolved, or you must again recur to the proposal of a compact similar to that rejected in 1785, or you must resort to the best and most effectual remedy—*a legislative union.*

I have dwelt longer, perhaps, upon this part of the subject, than was absolutely necessary, because, I believe there is scarcely any man who has ever asked himself, whether there is a solid, permanent system of connexion between the two countries, who could, upon reflection answer the question in the affirmative. But besides the authorities of the persons who made the arrangement in 1782, and of those who have since treated of it, to show that it was not deemed to be final and complete, I have farther the test of experience to show how imperfect it was, and how inadequate in practice to the great object of cementing the connexion, and placing it beyond the danger of being dissolved. In the single instance which has occurred (and that a melancholy one which all of us deplored), in which we could feel the effects of two jarring legislatures, we did feel it. On that occasion, it might have produced the most signal calamities, had we not been rescued from its danger by an event, to which no man can now look back without feeling the utmost joy and exultation; feelings, which subsequent circumstances have served to heighten and confirm. Every gentleman will know, that I must allude to the regency. With two independent legislatures, acting upon different principles, it was accident alone that preserved the identity of the executive power, which is the bond and security of the connexion: and even then the executive authority, though vested in one person, would have been held by two different tenures, by one tenure in England, by another in Ireland, had not the interposition of Providence prevented a circumstance pregnant with the most imminent perils, and which might have operated to a separation of the two kingdoms.

After seeing the recorded opinion of parliament, of those who made the arrangement of 1782, and after the decided testimony of experience on the subject, within the short period of sixteen years, perhaps it is hardly necessary to appeal to farther proofs of its inadequacy, or to desire gentlemen to look forward to possible cases, which I could easily put, and which will naturally suggest themselves to the minds of all, who choose to turn their attention to the subject.

But when we consider the distinct powers possessed by the two legislatures on all the great questions of peace and war, of alliances and confederacies (for they each have in principle a right to discuss them and decide upon them, though one of them has hitherto been wisely restrained by discretion from the exercise of that right), have we not seen circumstances to induce us to think it possible, at least, that on some of these important questions the opinions and decisions of the two parliaments might have been at variance? Are we talking of an indissoluble connexion, when we see it thus perpetually liable to be endangered? Can we really think that the interests of the empire, or of its different branches, rest upon a safe and solid basis at present? I am anxious to discuss this point closely with any man, either here, or in Ireland. Will it be said, that the parliament of the latter country is bound by our decision on the question of peace or war? And if not so bound, will any man, looking at human nature as it is, contend, that there is a sufficient certainty that the decision on that important subject will always be the same in both countries? I should be glad to receive a distinct answer to this question from the hon. gentleman, who has declared himself to be as warm a friend to the connexion between the two countries, as I am.

Suppose, for instance, that the present war, which the parliament of Great Britain considers to be just and necessary, had been voted by the Irish parliament to be unjust, unnecessary, extravagant, and hostile to the principles of humanity and freedom. Would that parliament have been bound by this country? If not, what security have we, at a moment the most important to our common interest and common salvation, that the two kingdoms should have but one friend and one foe? I repeat it; I am eager to hear what can be said in justification of a basis so im-

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perfect and unsound, and liable to be shaken by so many accidents. I have already observed that in the peculiar circumstances of the present moment, we may find stronger reasons to prove the necessity of correcting the system of connexion between this country and Ireland, of supplying its imperfections, and strengthening its weakness, than are to be found at any former period.

Having thus stated, Sir, and I think sufficiently proved, that the settlement of 1782, in every point of view in which it can be considered, is imperfect, and inadequate to the object of maintaining the connexion between the two kingdoms, I proceed next to the circumstances which peculiarly call upon us at the present moment to remedy that imperfection.

This country is at this time engaged in the most important, and momentous conflict that ever occurred in the history of the world; a conflict in which Great Britain is distinguished for having made the only manly and successful stand against the common enemies of civilized society. We see the point in which that enemy thinks us the most assailable. Are we not then bound in policy and prudence to strengthen that vulnerable point, involved as we are in a contest of liberty against despotism—of property against plunder and rapine—of religion and order against impiety and anarchy? There was a time when this would have been termed declamation; but, unfortunately, long and bitter experience has taught us to feel that it is only the feeble and imperfect representation of those calamities (the result of French principles and French arms), which are every day attested by the wounds of a bleeding world.

Is there a man who does not admit the importance of a measure which, at such a crisis, may augment the strength of the empire, and thereby ensure its safety? Would not that benefit to Ireland be of itself so solid, so inestimable, that, in comparison with it, all commercial interests, and the preservation of local habits and manners, would be trifling, even if they were endangerd by the present measure, which they undoubtedly are not? The people of Ireland are proud, I believe, of being associated with us in the great contest in which we are engaged, and must feel the advantage of augmenting the general force of the empire. That the present measure is calculated to produce that effect, is a proposition which, I think, cannot be disputed. There is not in any court of Europe a statesman so ill informed as not to know, that the general power of the empire would be increased to a very great extent indeed, by such a consolidation of the strength of the two kingdoms. In the course of the century every writer of any information on the subject has held the same language, and in the general strength of the empire both kingdoms are more concerned than in any particular interests which may belong to either. If we were to ask the ministers of our allies, what measure they thought the most likely to augment the power of the British empire, and consequently increase that strength by which they were now protected—if we were to ask the agent of our enemies, what measure would be the most likely to render their designs abortive, the answer would be the same in both cases, viz. the firm consolidation of every part of the empire.

There is another consideration well worth attention. Recollect what are the peculiar means by which we have been enabled to resist the unequalled and eccentric efforts of France, without any diminution, nay, with an increase, of our general prosperity—what, but the great commercial resources which we possess? A measure, then, which must communicate to such a mighty limb of the empire as Ireland all the commercial advantages which Great Britain possesses, which will open the markets of the one country to the other, which will give them both the common use of their capital, must, by diffusing a large portion of wealth into Ireland, considerably increase the resources, and consequently the strength of the whole empire.

But it is not merely in this general view, that I think the question ought to be considered. We ought to look to it with a view peculiarly to the permanent interest and security of Ireland. When that country was threatened with the double danger of hostile attacks by enemies without, and of treason within, from what quarter did she derive the means of her deliverance?—From the naval force of Great Britain—from the voluntary exertions of her military of every description, not called for by law—and from her pecuniary resources, added to the loyalty and energy of the inhabitants of Ireland itself; of which it is impossible to speak with too much praise, and which shows how well they deserve to be called the

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brethren of Britons. Their own courage might, perhaps, have ultimately succeeded in repelling the dangers by which they were threatened, but it would have been after a long contest, and after having waded through seas of blood. Are we sure that the same ready and effectual assistance which we have happily afforded, on the present occasion, will be always equally within our power? Great Britain has always felt a common interest in the safety of Ireland; but that common interest was never so obvious and urgent as when the common enemy made her attack upon Great Britain, through the medium of Ireland, and when their attack upon Ireland went to deprive her of her connexion with Great Britain, and to substitute in its stead the new government of the French republic. When that danger threatened Ireland, the purse of Great Britain was as open for the wants of Ireland, as for the necessities of England.

I do not, Sir, state these circumstances, as upbraiding Ireland for the benefits we have conferred; far from it; but I state them with pleasure, as showing the friendship and good-will with which this country has acted towards her. But if struggles of this sort may and must return again; if the worst dangers are those which are yet to come, dangers which must be greater from being more disguised; if those situations may arise when the same means of relief are not in our power, what is the remedy that reason and policy point out? It is to identify them with us; it is to make them a part of the same community, by giving them a full share of those accumulated blessings which are diffused throughout Great Britain; it is, in a word, by giving them a full participation of the wealth, the power, and the stability of the British empire. If then this measure comes recommended not only by the obvious defects of the system which now exists, but that it has also the pre-eminent recommendation of increasing the general power of the empire, and of guarding against future danger from the common enemy, we are next to consider it as to its effects upon the internal condition of Ireland.

I know perfectly well, that, as long as Ireland is separated from Great Britain, any attempt on our part to provide measures which we might think salutary, as respecting questions of contending sects or parties, of the claimed rights of the Catholics, or of the precautions necessary for the security of the Protestants—I know that all these, though they may have been brought forward by the very persons who are the advocates of the final adjustment in 1782, were, in fact, attacks upon the independence of the Irish parliament, and attempts to usurp the right of deciding on points which can only be brought within our province by compact. Until the kingdoms are united, any attempt to make regulations here for the internal state of Ireland must certainly be a violation of her independence. But feeling as I do for their interests and their welfare, I cannot be inattentive to the events that are passing before me; I must therefore repeat, that whoever looks at the circumstances to which I have alluded; whoever considers that the enemy have shown by their conduct, that they considered Ireland as the weakest and most vulnerable part of the empire; whoever reflects upon those dreadful and inexcusable cruelties instigated by the enemies of both countries, and upon those lamentable severities by which the exertions for the defence of Ireland were unhappily, but unavoidably, attended, and the necessity of which is itself one great aggravation of the crimes and treasons which led to them, must feel that, as it now stands composed, in the hostile division of its sects, in the animosities existing between ancient settlers and original inhabitants, in the ignorance and want of civilization, which marks that country more than almost any other country in Europe, in the unfortunate prevalence of Jacobin principles, arising from these causes, and augmenting their malignity, and which have produced that distressed state which we now deplore;—every one, I say, who reflects upon all these circumstances, must agree with me in thinking, that there is no cure but in the formation of a general imperial legislature, free alike from terror and from resentment, removed from the danger and agitation, uninfluenced by the prejudices, and uninflamed by the passions of that distracted country.

I know that it is impossible, if we wish to consider this subject properly, to consider it in any other point of view than as it affects the empire in general. I know that the interests of the two countries must be taken together, and that a man cannot speak as a true Englishman; unless he speaks as a true Irishman, nor as as a true Irishman, unless he speaks

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as a true Englishman; but if it were possible to separate them, and I could consider myself as addressing you, not as interested for the empire at large, but for Ireland alone, I should say, that it would be indispensably necessary, for the sake of that country, to compose its present distractions by the adoption of another system—I should say, that the establishment of an imperial legislature was the only means of healing its wounds, and of restoring it to tranquillity. I must here take the liberty of alluding to some topics which were touched upon during the discussion of the former night.

Among the great and known defects of Ireland, one of the most prominent features is, its want of industry and a capital; how are those wants to be supplied, but by blending more closely with Ireland the industry and the capital of this country? But, above all, in the great leading distinction between the people of Ireland (I mean their religious distinctions,) what is their situation?—The Protestant feels that the claims of the Catholics threaten the existence of the Protestant ascendancy; while, on the other hand, the great body of Catholics feel the establishment of the national Church, and their exclusion from the exercise of certain rights and privileges, a grievance. Between the two, it becomes a matter of difficulty in the minds of many persons, whether it would be better to listen only to the fears of the former, or to grant the claims of the latter.

I am well aware that the subject of religious distinction is a dangerous and delicate topic, especially when applied to a country such as Ireland, the situation of which is different in this respect from that of every other. Where the established religion of the state is the same as the general religion of the empire, and where the property of the country is in the hands of a comparatively small number of persons professing that established religion while the religion of a great majority of the people is different, it is not easy to say, on general principles, what system of church establishment in such a country would be free from difficulty and inconvenience. By many I know it will be contended, that the religion professed by the majority of the people would, at least, be entitled to an equality of privileges. I have heard such an argument used in this House; but those who apply it without qualification to the case of Ireland, forget surely the principles on which English interests and English connexion has been established in that country, and on which its present legislature is formed. No man can say that in the present state of things, and while Ireland remains a separate kingdom, full concessions could be made to the Catholics, without endangering the state, and shaking the constitution of Ireland to its centre.

On the other hand, without anticipating the discussion, or the propriety of agitating the question, or saying how soon or how late, it may be fit to discuss it, two propositions are indisputable: first, when the conduct of the Catholics shall be such as to make it safe for the government to admit them to the participation of the privileges granted to those of the established religion, and when the temper of the times shall be favourable to such a measure—when these events take place, it is obvious that such a question may be agitated in a united, imperial parliament, with much greater safety, than it could be in a separate legislature. In the second place, I think it certain that, even for whatever period it may be thought necessary, after the union to withhold from the Catholics the enjoyment of those advantages, many of the objections which at present arise out of their situation would be removed, if the Protestant legislature were no longer separate and local, but general and imperial; and the Catholics themselves would at once feel a mitigation of the most goading and irritating of their present causes of compliant.

How far in addition to this great and leading consideration, it may also be wise and practicable to accompany the measure by some mode of relieving the lower orders from the pressure of tythes, which, in many instances, operate at present as a great practical evil, or to make, under proper regulations, and without breaking in on the security of the present Protestant establishment, an effectual and adequate provision for the Catholic clergy, it is not now necessary to discuss. It is sufficient to say, that these and all other subordinate points connected with the same subject, are more likely to be permanently and satisfactorily settled by a united legislature, than by any local arrangements. On these grounds I contend, that with a view to providing an effectual remedy for the distractions which have unhappily prevailed in Ireland, with a view of removing those causes which

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have endangered, and still endanger its security, the measure which I am now proposing promises to be more effectual than any other which can be devised; and on these grounds alone, if there existed no other, I should feel it my duty to submit it to the House.

But, Sir, though what I have thus stated, relates most immediately to the great object of healing the dissensions, and providing for the internal tranquillity of Ireland, there are also other objects which, though comparatively with this of inferior importance, are yet in themselves highly material, and in a secondary view well worthy of attention.

I have heard it asked, when I pressed the measure, What are the positive advantages that Ireland is to derive from it? To this very question I presume the considerations, which I have already urged, afford a sufficient answer. But, in fact, the question itself is to be considered in another view; and it will be found to bear some resemblance to a question which has been repeatedly put, by some of the gentlemen opposite to me, during the last six years, What are the advantages which Great Britain has gained by the present war with France?

To this, the brilliant successes of the British arms by sea and land, our unexampled naval victories over all our enemies, the solid acquisition of valuable territory, the general increase of our power, the progressive extension of our commerce, and a series of events more glorious than any that ever adorned the page of our history, afford at once an ample and a satisfactory answer. But there is a another general answer which we have uniformly given, and which would alone be sufficient; it is, that we did not enter into this war for any purpose of ambition; our object was not to acquire, but to preserve; and in this sense, what we have gained by the war is, in one word, all that we should have lost without it; it is the preservation of our constitution, our independence, our honour, our existence as a nation.

In the same manner I might answer the question with respect to Ireland. I might enumerate the general advantages which Ireland would derive from the effects of the arrangement to which I have already referred—the protection which she will secure to herself in the hour of danger; the most effectual means of increasing her commerce and improving her agriculture, the command of English capital, the infusion of English manners and English industry, necessarily tending to ameliorate her condition, to accelerate the progress of internal civilization, and to terminate those feuds and dissensions which now distract the country, and which she does not possess, within herself, the power either to control or to extinguish. She would see the avenue to honours, to distinctions, and exalted situations in the general seat of empire, opened to all those whose abilities and talents enable them to indulge an honourable and laudable ambition.

But, independent of all these advantages, I might also answer, that the question is not what Ireland is to gain, but what she is to preserve; not merely how she may best improve her situation, but how she is to avert a pressing and immediate danger. In this view, what she gains is, the preservation of all those blessings arising from the British constitution, and which are inseparable from her connexions with Great Britain;—those blessings, of which it has long been the aim of France, in conjunction with domestic traitors to deprive her, and on their ruins to establish (with all its attendant miseries and horrors) a Jacobin republic, founded on French influence, and existing only in subserviency to France.

Such, Sir, would be the answer, if we direct our attention only to the question of general advantage. And here I should be inclined to stop; but since it has also been more particularly asked, what are the advantages which she is to gain, in point of commerce and manufactures, I am desirous of applying my answer, more immediately and distinctly to that part of the subject; and as I know that the statement will carry more conviction with it to those who make the inquiry, if given in the words of the right hon. gentleman, to whom, and to whose opinions, I have had more than one occasion to advert in the course of this night I will read you an extract from his recorded sentiments on the subject, in the year 1785, on this same memorable occasion of the commercial propositions. Speaking of a solid and unalterable compact between the two countries, speaking expressly of the peculiar importance of insuring a continuance of those commercial benefits, which she at that time held only at the discretion of this country, he says, "The exportation of Irish products to England amounts to two millions and a half annually; and

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the exportation of British products to Ireland amounts to but one million. He then proceeds to reason upon the advantage which Ireland would derive under such circumstances, from guarding against mutual prohibitions; and he accompanies the statement, which I have just read, with this observation:—"If, indeed, the adjustment were to take away the benefit from Ireland, it would be a good cause for rejecting it; but, as it for ever confirms all the advantages we derived from our linen trade, and binds England from making any law that can be injurious to it, surely gentlemen who regard that trade, and *whose fortunes and rents depend on its prosperity, will not entertain a moment's doubt about embracing the offer.*"

Such was the reasoning of the Irish chancellor of the exchequer, which I consider to have been perfectly just. With reference to his late opinions, I do not think I can more forcibly reply to a person who signs his name to propositions which declare, that the ruin of the linen trade of Ireland is likely to be the consequence of a union, than by opposing to him his own opinion. I shall be able to strengthen the former opinion of that gentleman by stating, that the progress that has been made in commercial advantages to Ireland since 1785, has been such as to render his argument still more applicable. What is the nature of that commerce, explained by the same person in so concise and forcible a manner, that I am happy to use his own statement? He does not confine himself to the gross amount, but gives the articles in detail:—"Britain," he says, "imports annually from us 2,500,000*l.* of our products, all, or very nearly all, duty free, and covenants never to lay a duty on them. We import about a million of her's, and raise a revenue on almost every article of it, and reserve the power of continuing that revenue. She exports to us salt for our fisheries and provisions; hops, which we cannot grow; coals, which we cannot raise; tin, which we have not; and bark, which we cannot get elsewhere; and all these without reserving any duty."

I will not tire the patience of the House by reading farther extracts; but the right hon. gentleman's whole speech, in like manner, points out the advantages of the commercial propositions (at that time under consideration) as a ground-work of a compact between the two countries, in 1785, on commercial subjects. But how stands the case now? The trade is at this time infinitely more advantageous to Ireland. It will be proved, from the documents which I hold in my hand, as far as relates to the mere interchange of manufactures, that the manufactures exported to Ireland from Great Britain, in 1797, very little exceeded a million sterling (the articles of produce amount to nearly the same sum), while Great Britain, on the other hand, imported from Ireland to the amount of near three millions in the manufactured articles of linen and linen yarn, and between two and three millions in provisions and cattle, besides corn and other articles of produce.

In addition to these articles, there are other circumstances of advantage to Ireland. Articles which are essential to her trade and to her subsistence, or serve as raw materials for her manufactures, are sent from hence free of duty. It is expressly stated, on the same authority, that all that we take back from Ireland was liable to a duty in that country on their exports. The increasing produce of the chief article of their manufacture, and four-fifths of her whole export trade, are to be ascribed, not to that *Independent Legislature*, but to the liberality of the British parliament. It is by the free admission of linens for our market, and the bounties granted by the British parliament on its re-export, that the linen trade has been brought to the height at which we now see it. To the parliament of this country, then, it is now owing, that a market has been opened for her linen to the amount of three millions. By the bounty we give to Ireland, we afford her a double market for that article, and (what is still more striking and important) we have prevented a competition against her, arising from the superior cheapness of the linen manufactures of the continent, by subjecting their importation to a duty of thirty per cent. Nothing would more clearly show what would be the danger to Ireland, from the competition in all its principal branches of the linen trade, than the simple fact, that we even now import foreign linens, under this heavy duty, to an amount equal to a seventh part of all that Ireland is able to send us, with the preference that has been stated. By this arrangement alone, we must, therefore, be considered, either as foregoing between seven and eight hundred thousand pounds per annum in revenue, which we should collect if we chose to levy the same duty

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on all linens, Irish as well as foreign; or, on the other hand, as sacrificing, perhaps, at least a million sterling in the price paid for those articles, by the subjects of this country, which might be saved, if we allowed the importation of all linen, foreign as well as Irish, equally free from duty.

The present measure is, however, in its effects, calculated not merely for a confirmation of the advantages on which the person, to whom I have alluded, has insisted. It is obvious that a fuller and more perfect connexion of the two countries, from whatever cause it may arise, must produce a greater facility and freedom of commercial intercourse, and ultimately tend to the advantage of both. The benefits to be derived to either country from such an arrangement, must indeed, in a great measure, be gradual; but they are not, on that account, the less certain, and they cannot be stated in more forcible language than in that used in the speech to which I have referred.—"Gentlemen undervalue the reduction of British duties on our manufactures. I agree with them it may not operate soon, but we are to look forward to a final settlement; and it is impossible but that in time, with as good climate, equal natural powers, cheaper food, and fewer taxes, we must be able to sell to them. When commercial jealousy shall be banished by final settlement, and trade take its natural and steady course, the kingdoms will cease to look to rivalship, each will make that fabric which it can do cheapest, and buy from the other what it cannot make so advantageously. Labour will be then truly employed to profit, not diverted by bounties, jealousies, or legislative interference, from its natural and beneficial course. This system will attain its real object, consolidating the strength of the remaining parts of the empire, by encouraging the communications of their market among themselves, with preference to every part against all strangers!"

I am, at least, therefore, secure from the design of appearing to deliver any partial or commercial opinion of my own, when I thus state, on the authority of a person the best informed, and who then judged dispassionately, both the infinite importance to Ireland of securing permanently the great commercial advantages which she now holds at the discretion of Great Britain, and the additional benefit which she would derive from any settlement which opened to her gradually a still more free and complete commercial intercourse with this country. And while I state thus strongly the commercial advantages to the sister kingdom, I have no alarm lest I should excite any sentiment of jealousy here. I know that the inhabitants of Great Britain wish well to the prosperity of Ireland; that, if the kingdoms are really and solidly united, they feel that to increase the commercial wealth of one country, is not to diminish that of the other, but to increase the strength and power of both. But to justify that sentiment, we must be satisfied that the wealth we are pouring into the lap of Ireland is not every day liable to be snatched from us, and thrown into the scale of the enemy. If, therefore, Ireland is to continue, as I trust it will for ever, an essential part of the integral strength of the British empire! if her strength is to be permanently our's, and our strength to be her's, neither I nor any English minister can ever be deterred, by the fear of creating jealousy in the hearts of Englishmen, from stating the advantages of a closer connexion, or from giving any assistance to the commercial prosperity of that kingdom.

If ever, indeed, I should have the misfortune to witness the melancholy moment when such principles must be abandoned, when all hope of seeing Ireland permanently and securely connected with this country shall be at an end, I shall, at least, have the consolation of knowing, that it will not be the want of temper or forbearance, of conciliation, of kindness, or of full explanation on our part, which will have produced an event so fatal to Ireland, and so dangerous to Great Britain. If ever the overbearing power of prejudice and passion shall produce the fatal consequence, it will too late be perceived and acknowledged, that all the great commercial advantages which Ireland at present enjoys, and which are continually increasing, are to be ascribed to the liberal conduct, the fostering care of the British empire, extended to the sister kingdom as to a part of ourselves, and not (as has been fallaciously and vainly pretended) to any thing which has been done, or can be done, by the independent power of her own separate legislature.

I have thus, Sir, endeavoured to state to you the reasons, why I think this measure advisable; why I wish it to be proposed to the parliament of Ireland, with

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temper and fairness; and why it appears to me entitled, at least, to a calm and dispassionate discussion in that kingdom. I am aware, however, that objections have been urged against the measure, some of which are undoubtedly plausible, and have been but too successful in their influence on the Irish parliament. Of these objections I shall now proceed, as concisely as possible, to take some notice.

The first is, what I heard alluded to by the hon. gentleman opposite to me, when his majesty's message was brought down; namely—That the parliament of Ireland is incompetent to entertain and discuss the question, or rather, to act upon the measure proposed, without having previously obtained the consent of the people of Ireland, their constituents. But, Sir, I am led to suppose, from what the hon. gentleman afterwards stated, that he made this objection, rather by way of deprecating the discussion of the question, than as entertaining the smallest doubt upon it himself. If, however, the hon. gentleman, or any other gentleman on the other side of the House, should seriously entertain a doubt on the subject, I shall be ready to discuss it with him distinctly, either this night or at any future opportunity. For the present, I will assume that no man can deny the competency of the parliament of Ireland (representing as it does, in the language of our constitution, "*lawfully, fully, and freely, all the estates of the people of the realm,*") to make laws to bind that people, unless he is disposed to distinguish that parliament from the parliament of Great Britain, and, while he maintains the independence of the Irish legislature, yet denies to it the lawful and essential powers of parliament. No man, who maintains the parliament of Ireland to be co-equal with our own, can deny its competency on this question, unless he means to go the length of denying, at the same moment, the whole of the authority of the parliament of Great Britain—to shake every principle of legislation—and to maintain, that all the acts passed, and every thing done by parliament, or sanctioned by its authority, however sacred, however beneficial, is neither more nor less than an act of usurpation. He must not only deny the validity of the union between Scotland and England, but he must deny the authority of every one of the proceedings of the united legislature since the union; nay, Sir, he must go still farther, and deny the authority under which we now sit and deliberate here as a House of Parliament: of course, he must deny the validity of the adjustment of 1782, and call in question every measure which he has himself been the most forward to have enforced. This point, Sir, is of so much importance, that I think I ought not to suffer the opportunity to pass, without illustrating more fully what I mean. If this principle of the incompetency of parliament to the decision of the measure be admitted, or if it be contended, that parliament has no legitimate authority to discuss and decide upon it, you will be driven to the necessity of recognizing a principle, the most dangerous that ever was adopted in any civilized state, —I mean the principle, that parliament cannot adopt any measure new in its nature, and of great importance, without appealing to the constituent and delegating authority for directions. If that doctrine be true, look to what an extent it will carry you. If such an argument could be set up and maintained, you acted without any legitimate authority when you created the representation of the principality of Wales, or of either of the counties palatine of England. Every law that parliament ever made, without that appeal, either as to its own frame and constitution, as to the qualification of the electors or the elected, as to the great and fundamental point of the succession to the crown, was a breach of treaty and an act of usurpation.

If we turn to Ireland itself, what do gentlemen think of the power of that parliament, which, without any fresh delegation from its Protestant constituents, associates to itself all the Catholic electors, and thus destroys a fundamental distinction on which it was formed? God forbid that I should object to or blame any of these measures! I am only stating the extent to which the principle, that parliament has no authority to decide upon the present measure, will lead; and, if it be admitted in one case, it must be admitted in all. Will any man say, that (although a Protestant parliament in Ireland, chosen exclusively by Protestant constituents, has, by its own inherent power, and without consulting those constituents, admitted and comprehended the Catholics, who were till then, in fact, a separate community) that parliament cannot associate itself with another Protestant community, represented by a Protestant parliament, having one interest with itself, and similar

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in its laws, its constitution, and its established religion? What must be said by those who have at any time been friends to any plan of parliamentary reform, and particularly such as have been most recently brought forward, either in Great Britain or Ireland? Whatever may have been thought of the propriety of the measure, I never heard any doubt of the competency of parliament to consider and discuss it. Yet I defy any man to maintain the principle of those plans, without contending that, as a member of parliament, he possesses a right to concur in disfranchising those who sent him to parliament, and to select others, by whom he was not elected, in their stead. I am sure that no sufficient distinction, in point of principle, can be successfully maintained for a single moment; nor should I deem it necessary to dwell on this point, in the manner I do, were I not convinced that it is connected in part with all those false and dangerous notions on the subject of government which have lately become too prevalent in the world. It may, in fact, be traced to that gross perversion of the principles of all political society, which rests on the supposition that there exists continually, in every government, a sovereignty *in abeyance* (as it were) on the part of the people, ready to be called forth on every occasion, or rather, on every pretence, when it may suit the purposes of the party or faction who are the advocates of this doctrine to suppose an occasion for its exertion. It is in these false principles that are contained the seeds of all the misery, desolation, and ruin, which, in the present day, have spread themselves over so large a proportion of the habitable globe.

These principles, Sir, are at length so well known and understood in their practical effects, that they can no longer hope for one enlightened or intelligent advocate, when they appear in their true colours. Yet, with all the horror we all feel, in common with the rest of the world, at the effect of them, with all the confirmed and increasing love and veneration which we feel towards the constitution of our country, founded as it is, both in theory and experience, on principles directly the reverse, there are too many among us, who, while they abhor and reject such opinions, when presented to them in their naked deformity, suffer them, in a more disguised shape, to be gradually infused into their minds, and insensibly to influence and bias their sentiments and arguments on the greatest and most important discussions. This concealed poison is now more to be dreaded than any open attempt to support such principles by argument, or to enforce them by arms. No society, whatever be its particular form, can long subsist, if this principle is once admitted. In every government there must reside somewhere a supreme, absolute, and unlimited authority. This is equally true of every lawful monarchy—of every aristocracy—of every pure democracy (if indeed such a form of government ever has existed, or ever can exist)—and of those mixed constitutions, formed and compounded from the others, which we are justly inclined to prefer to any of them. In all these governments, indeed alike, that power may by possibility be abused; but whether the abuse is such as to justify and call for the interference of the people collectively, or, more properly speaking, of any portion of it, must always be an extreme case, and a question of the greatest and most perilous responsibility, not in law only, but in conscience and in duty, to all those who either act upon it themselves, or persuade others to do so. But no provision for such a case ever has been or can be made beforehand; it forms no chapter in any known code of laws; it can find no place in any system of human jurisprudence. But, above all, if such a principle can make no part of any established constitution, not even of those where the government is so framed as to be most liable to the abuse of its powers, it will be preposterous indeed to suppose that it can be admitted in one where those powers are so distributed and balanced as to furnish the best security against the probability of such an abuse. Shall that principle be sanctioned as a necessary part of the best government, which cannot be admitted to exist as an established check even upon the worst! Pregnant as it is with danger and confusion, shall it be received and authorized in proportion as every reason, which can ever make it necessary to recur to it, is not likely to exist? Yet, Sir, I know not how it is, that, in proportion as we are less likely to have occasion for so desperate a remedy, in proportion as a government is so framed as to provide within itself the best guard and control on the exercise of every branch of authority, to furnish the means of preventing or correcting every abuse of power,

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and to secure, by its own natural operation, a due attention to the interest and feelings of every part of the community, in that very proportion persons have been found perverse enough to imagine, that such a constitution admits and recognizes, as a part of it, that which is inconsistent with the nature of any government, and, above all, inapplicable to our own.

I have said more, Sir, upon this subject than I should have thought necessary, if I had not felt that this false and dangerous mockery of the *sovereignty of the people* is in truth one of the chief elements of Jacobinism, one of the favourite impostures to mislead the understanding, and to flatter and inflame the passions of the mass of mankind, who have not the opportunity of examining and exposing it, and that, as such, on every occasion, and in every shape in which it appears, it ought to be combated and resisted by every friend to civil order, and to the peace and happiness of mankind.

Sir, the next and not the least prevalant, objection, is one which is contained in words which are an appeal to a natural and laudable, but what I must call an erroneous and mistaken, sense of national pride. It is an appeal to the generous and noble passions of a nation easily inflamed under any supposed attack upon its honour, I mean the attempt to represent the question of a union by compact between the parliaments of the two kingdoms as a question involving the independence of Ireland. It has been said, that no compensation could be made to any country for the surrender of its national independence. Sir, on this, as well as on every part of the question, I am desirous gentlemen should come closely to the point, that they should sift it to the bottom, and ascertain upon what grounds and principles their opinion really rests. Do they mean to maintain that in any humiliating, in any degrading sense of the word which can be acted upon practically as a rule, and which can lead to any useful conclusion, that at any time when the government of any two separate countries unite in forming one more extensive empire, the individuals who composed either of the former narrow societies are afterwards less members of an independent country, or to any valuable and useful purpose less possessed of political freedom or civil happiness, than they were before? It must be obvious to every gentleman who will look at the subject, in tracing the histories of all the countries, the most proud of their present existing independence, of all the nations in Europe, there is not one that could exist in the state in which it now stands, if that principle had been acted upon by our forefathers; and Europe must have remained to this hour in a state of ignorance and barbarism, from the perpetual warfare of independent and petty states. In the instance of our own country, it would be a superfluous waste of time to enumerate the steps by which all its parts were formed into one kingdom; but will any man in general assert, that in all the different unions which have formed the principal states of Europe, their inhabitants have become less free, that they have had less of which to be proud, less scope for their own exertions than they had in their former situation? If this doctrine is to be generally maintained, what becomes of the situation at this hour of any one county of England, or of any one county of Ireland, now united under the independent parliament of that kingdom? If it be pushed to its full extent, it is obviously incompatible with all civil society. As the former principle of the sovereignty of the people strikes at the foundation of all governments, so this is equally hostile to all political confederacy, and mankind must be driven back to what is called the state of nature.

But while I combat this general and abstract principle, which would operate as an objection to every union between separate states, on the grounds of the sacrifice of independence, do I mean to contend that there is in no case just ground for such a sentiment? Far from it: it may become, on many occasions, the first duty of a free and generous people. If there exists a country which contains within itself the means of military protection, the naval force necessary for its defence, which furnishes objects of industry sufficient for the subsistence of its inhabitants, and pecuniary resources adequate to maintaining, with dignity, the rank which it has attained among the nations of the world; if, above all, it enjoys the blessings of internal content and tranquillity, and possesses a distinct constitution of its own, the defects of which, if any, it is within itself capable of correcting; and if that constitution be equal, if not superior, to that of any other in the world, (which is nearly the same thing) if those who live under it believe it to be so,

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and fondly cherish that opinion, I can indeed well understand that such a country must be jealous of any measure, which, even by its own consent, under the authority of its own lawful government, is to associate it as a part of a larger and more extensive empire.

But, Sir, if, on the other hand, it should happen that there be a country which, against the greatest of all dangers that threaten its peace and security, has not adequate means of protecting itself without the aid of another nation; if that other be a neighbouring and kindred nation, speaking the same language, whose laws, whose customs and habits are the same in principle, but carried to a greater degree of perfection, with a more extensive commerce, and more abundant means of acquiring and diffusing national wealth; the stability of whose government—the excellence of whose constitution, is more than ever the admiration and envy of Europe, and of which the very country of which we are speaking, can only boast an inadequate and imperfect resemblance;—under such circumstances, I would ask, what conduct would be prescribed by every rational principle of dignity, of honour, or of interest? I would ask, whether this is not a faithful description of the circumstances which ought to dispose Ireland to a union?—Whether Great Britain is not precisely the nation with which, on these principles, a country, situated as Ireland is, would desire to unite? Does a union, under such circumstances, by free consent, and on just and equal terms, deserve to be branded as a proposal for subjecting Ireland to a foreign yoke? Is it not rather the free and voluntary association of two great countries, which join, for their common benefit, in one empire, where each will retain its proportional weight and importance, under the security of equal laws, reciprocal affection, and inseparable interests, and which want nothing but that indissoluble connexion to render both invincible?

"Non ego nec Teucris Italos parere jubebo,
Nec nova regna peto; paribus se legibus ambæ
Invictæ gentes æterna in fœdera mittant."

Sir, I have nearly stated all that is necessary for me to trouble the House with; there are, however, one or two other objections which I wish not entirely to pass over: one of them is, a general notion that a union with Great Britain must necessarily increase one of the great evils of Ireland, by producing depopulation in many parts of the country, and by increasing greatly the number of absentees. I do not mean to deny that this effect would, to a limited extent, take place during a part of the year; but I think it will not be difficult for me to prove, that this circumstance will be more than counterbalanced by the operation of the system in other respects.

If it be true that this measure has an inevitable tendency to admit the introduction of that British capital which is most likely to give life to all the operations of commerce, and to all the improvements of agriculture; if it be that, which above all other considerations is most likely to give security, quiet, and internal repose to Ireland; if it is likely to remove the chief bar to the internal advancement of wealth and civilization, by a more intimate intercourse with England; if it is more likely to communicate from hence those habits which distinguish this country; and which, by a continued gradation, unite the highest and the lowest orders of the community without a chasm in any part of the system; if it is not only likely to invite (as I have already said) English capital to set commerce in motion, but to offer it the use of new markets, to open fresh resources of wealth and industry, can wealth, can industry, can civilization increase among the whole bulk of the people without much more than counterbalancing the partial effect of the removal of the few individuals who, for a small part of the year, would follow the seat of legislation? If, notwithstanding the absence of parliament from Dublin, it would still remain the centre of education and of the internal commerce of a country increasing in improvement; if it would still remain the seat of legal discussion, which must always increase with an increase of property and occupation, will it be supposed, with a view even to the interests of those whose partial interests have been most successfully appealed to; with a view either to the respectable body of the bar, to the merchant, or shopkeeper of Dublin (if it were possible to suppose that a transaction of this sort ought to be referred to that single criterion), that they would not find their proportionate share of advantage in the general advantage of the state? Let it be remembered also, that if the transfer of the seat of legislature may call from Ireland to England the members of the united parliament, yet, after the union, property, influence,

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and consideration in Ireland will lead, as much as in Great Britain, to all the objects of imperial ambition; and there must consequently, exist a new incitement to persons to acquire property in that country, and to those who possess it, to reside there, and to cultivate the good opinion of those with whom they live, and to extend and improve their influence and connexions.

But, Sir, I need not dwell longer on argument, however it may satisfy my own mind, because we can on this question refer to experience. I see every gentleman anticipates that I allude to Scotland. What has been the result of the union there? An union, give me leave to say, as much opposed, and by much the same arguments, prejudices, and misconceptions, as are urged at this moment; creating too the same alarms, and provoking the same outrages, as have lately taken place in Dublin. Look at the metropolis of Scotland: the population of Edinburgh has been more than doubled since the union, and a new city added to the old. But we may be told, that Edinburgh has engrossed all the commerce of that country, and has those advantages which Dublin cannot expect. Yet while Edinburgh, deprived of its parliament, but retaining, as Dublin would retain, its courts of justice; continuing, as Dublin would continue, the resort of those whose circumstances would not permit them to visit a distant metropolis; continuing, as Dublin would continue, the seat of national education, while Edinburgh has baffled all the predictions of that period, what has been the situation of Glasgow? The population of Glasgow, since the union, has increased in the proportion of between five and six to one: look at its progress in manufactures; look at its general advantages, and tell me what ground there is, judging by experience in aid of theory, for those gloomy apprehensions which have been so industriously excited.

There remains, Sir, another general line of argument, which I have already anticipated, and I hope answered, that the commercial privileges now enjoyed by Ireland, and to which it owes so much of its prosperity, would be less secure than at present. I have given an answer to that already, by stating, that they are falsely imputed to the independence of the Irish parliament, for that they are, in fact, owing to the exercise of the voluntary discretion of the British parliament, unbound by compact, prompted only by its natural disposition to consider the interests of Ireland the same as its own: and if that has been done while Ireland is only united to us in the imperfect and precarious manner in which it is, while it has a separate parliament, notwithstanding the commercial jealousies of our own manufacturers; if under these circumstances we have done so, if we have done so with no other connexion than that which now subsists, and while Ireland has no share in our representation, what fresh ground can there be for apprehension, when she will have her proportionate weight in the legislature, and will be united with us as closely as Lancashire or Yorkshire, or any other county in Great Britain?

Sir, I have seen it under the same authority to which I am sorry so often to advert, that the linen trade would be injured, and that there will be no security for its retaining its present advantages. I have already stated to you (and with that very authority in my favour) that those advantages are at present precarious, and that their security can only arise from compact with Great Britain. Such a compact this measure would establish in the most solemn manner; but besides this, Sir, the natural policy of this country, not merely its experienced liberality, but the identity of interests after a union, would offer a security worth a thousand compacts.

Sir, the only other general topic of objection is that, upon which great pains have been taken to raise an alarm in Ireland. The idea that the main principle of the measure was, to subject Ireland to a load of debt and an increase of taxes, and to expose her to the consequences of all our alleged difficulties and supposed necessities.

Sir, I hope the zeal, the spirit, and the liberal and enlarged policy of this country, has given ample proof that it is not from a pecuniary motive that we seek a union. If it is not desireable on the grounds I have stated, it cannot be recommended for the mere purpose of taxation; but to quiet any jealousy on this subject, here again let us look to Scotland: Is there any instance where, with 45 members on her part, and 513 on our's, that part of the united kingdom has paid more than its proportion to the general burdens? Is it then, Sir, any ground of apprehension that we are likely to tax

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Ireland more heavily when she becomes associated with ourselves? To tax in its due proportion the whole of the empire, to the utter exclusion of the idea of the predominance of one part of society over another, is the great characteristic of British finance, as equality of laws is of the British constitution.

But, Sir, in addition to this, if we come to the details of this proposition, it is in our power to fix, for any number of years which shall be thought fit, the proportion by which the contribution of Ireland to the expenses of the state, shall be regulated; that these proportions shall not be such as would make a contribution greater than the necessary amount of its own present necessary expenses as a separate kingdom; and even after that limited period, the proportion of the whole contribution, from time to time, might be made to depend on the comparative produce, in each kingdom, of such general taxes as might be thought to afford the best criterion of their respective wealth. Or, what I should hope would be found practicable, the system of internal taxation in each country might gradually be so equalized and assimilated, on the leading articles, as to make all rules of specific proportion unnecessary, and to secure, that Ireland shall never be taxed but in proportion as we tax ourselves.

The application of these principles, however, will form matter of future discussion. I mention them only as strongly showing, from the misrepresentation which has taken place on this part of the subject, how incumbent it is upon the House to receive these propositions, and to adopt, after due deliberation, such resolutions as may record to Ireland the terms upon which we are ready to meet her; and, in the mean time, let us wait, not without impatience, but without dissatisfaction, for that moment, when the effect of reason and discussion may reconcile the minds of men in that kingdom to a measure, which I am sure will be found as necessary for their peace and happiness, as it will be conducive to the general security and advantage of the British empire.—Sir, it remains for me only to lay these Resolutions before the House, wishing that the more detailed discussion of them may be reserved to a future day.

RESOLUTIONS.

Resolved, 1. "That in order to promote and secure the essential interests of Great Britain and Ireland, and to consolidate the strength, power, and resources of the British empire, it will be advisable to concur in such measures as may best tend to unite the two kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland into one kingdom, in such manner, and on such terms and conditions, as may be established by acts of the respective parliaments of his majesty's said kingdoms.

2. "That it appears to this committee that it would be fit to propose as the first article to serve as a basis of the said union, that the said kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland shall upon a day to be agreed upon, be united into one kingdom, by the name of the *United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.*

3. "That for the same purpose it appears also to this committee, that it would be fit to propose that the succession to the monarchy and the imperial crown of the said united kingdoms shall continue limited and settled, in the same manner as the imperial crown of the said kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland now stands limited and settled, according to the existing laws, and to the terms of the union between England and Scotland.

4. "That for the same purpose it appears also to this committee, that it would be fit to propose that the said united kingdom be represented in one and the same parliament, to be styled the parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and that such a number of lords spiritual and temporal, and such a number of members of the House of Commons as shall be hereafter agreed upon by acts of the respective parliaments as aforesaid, shall sit and vote in the said parliament on the part of Ireland, and shall be summoned, chosen, and returned, in such manner as shall be fixed by an act of the parliament of Ireland previous to the said union; and that every member hereafter to sit and vote in the said parliament of the united kingdom shall, until the said parliament shall otherwise provide, take and subscribe the same oaths, and make the same declaration, as are by law required to be taken, subscribed, and made, by the members of the parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland.

5. "That for the same purpose it appears also to this committee, that it would be fit, to propose that the churches of England and Ireland, and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government thereof, shall be preserved as now by law established.

6. "That for the same purpose it appears also to this committee, that it would be fit to propose that his majesty's subjects in Ireland shall at all times hereafter be entitled to the same privileges, and be on the same footing in respect of trade and navigation, in all ports and places belonging to Great Britain, and in all cases with respect to which treaties shall be made by his majesty, his heirs, or successors, with any foreign power, as his majesty's subjects in Great Britain; that no duty shall be imposed on the import or export between Great Britain and Ireland of any ar-

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ticles now duty free; and that on other articles there shall be established, for a time to be limited, such a moderate rate of equal duties as shall, previous to the union, be agreed upon and approved by the respective parliaments, subject, after the expiration of such limited time, to be diminished equally with respect to both kingdoms, but in no case to be increased; that all articles which may at any time hereafter be imported into Great Britain from foreign parts, shall be importable through either kingdom into the other, subject to the like duties and regulations as if the same were imported directly from foreign parts; that where any articles, the growth, produce, or manufacture of either kingdom, are subject to any internal duty in one kingdom, such countervailing duties (over and above any duties on import to be fixed as aforesaid) shall be imposed, as shall be necessary to prevent any inequality in that respect; and that all other matters of trade and commerce other than the foregoing, and than such others as may before the union be specially agreed upon for the due encouragement of the agriculture and manufactures of the respective kingdoms, shall remain to be regulated from time to time by the united parliament.

7. "That for the like purpose it would be fit to propose that the charge arising from the payment of the interest or sinking fund for the reduction of the principle of the debt incurred in either kingdom before the union, shall continue to be separately defrayed by Great Britain and Ireland respectively. That for a number of years to be limited, the future ordinary expenses of the united kingdom, in peace or war, shall be defrayed by Great Britain and Ireland jointly, according to such proportions as shall be established by the respective parliaments previous to the union; and that after the expiration of the time to be so limited, the proportions shall not be liable to be varied, except according to such rates and principles as shall be in like manner agreed upon previous to the union.

8. "That for the like purpose it would be fit to propose that all laws in force at the time of the union, and that all the courts of civil or ecclesiastical jurisdiction within the respective kingdoms shall remain as now by law established within the same, subject only to such alterations or regulations from time to time as circumstances may appear to the parliament of the united kingdom to require.

9. "That the foregoing Resolutions be laid before his majesty, with an humble address assuring his majesty that we have proceeded with the utmost attention to the consideration of the important objects recommended to us in his majesty's gracious message:

"That we entertain a firm persuasion that a complete and entire union between Great Britain and Ireland, founded on equal and liberal principles, on the similarity of laws, constitution, and government, and on a sense of mutual interests and affections, by promoting the security, wealth, and commerce, of the respective kingdoms, and by allaying the distractions which have unhappily prevailed in Ireland, must afford fresh means of opposing at all times an effectual resistance to the destructive projects of our foreign and domestic enemies, and must tend to confirm and augment the stability, power, and resources of the empire.

"Impressed with these considerations, we feel it our duty humbly to lay before his majesty such propositions as appear to us best calculated to form the basis of such a settlement, leaving it to his majesty's wisdom, at such time and in such manner as his majesty, in his parental solicitude for the happiness of his people, shall judge fit, to communicate these propositions to his parliament of Ireland, with whom we shall be at all times ready to concur in all such measures as may be found most conducive to the accomplishment of this great and salutary work. And we trust that, after full and mature consideration, such a settlement may be framed and established, by the deliberate consent of the parliaments of both kingdoms, as may be conformable to the sentiments, wishes, and real interests of his majesty's faithful subjects of Great Britain and Ireland, and may unite them inseparably in the full enjoyment of the blessings of our free and invaluable constitution, in the support of the honour and dignity of his majesty's crown, and in the preservation and advancement of the welfare and prosperity of the whole British empire."

Mr. *Sheridan* said:—Much, Sir, as I must admire, and much as I am sure the House is disposed to admire the very eloquent harangue just delivered by the right hon. gentleman, yet I must take the liberty of reminding them that there are some questions of a nature so serious, and of a tendency so eventful, that in attending to the mode in which such measures are recommended, they should be particularly suspicious of the eloquence that would surprise their approbation. Such is the nature of the question now under the consideration of the House, and in considering it they should doubtless be on their guard against the seductions of eloquence, and should listen only to the sober dictates of their cool and unbiassed judgment. That the situation in which we are now placed, is of that nice and perilous nature, I now assert, and last week I conjured the House not rashly and unseasonably to stir a question which, whether it be considered as it regards Great Britain or Ireland, should not, during a crisis like the present, be incautiously brought under discussion. The right hon. gentleman and the House ap-

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peared then to be of a different opinion; but now I think I may fairly venture, to say that excepting himself, and a few of his friends, there is no one who does not sincerely regret that this proposition has been started in the Irish parliament. But however they may lament it, the right hon. gentleman seems determined to follow up the pledge which he gave of persevering in his design, a pledge in which also he seems desirous to involve his friends; for he roundly tells them, that the measure he has now embarked in, is one that shall form the favourite object of his political life; a measure which no diminution of credit, no loss of popularity, no dereliction of friends and adherents, no clamour, tumult, or opposition from whatever quarter shall induce him to abandon; so essential does he deem it to the security and the happiness of the two countries. To counteract his pride and presumption, I feel it my duty to implore the House, not to risk that pledge which the right hon. gentleman so confidently calls for, either now or on any future day. It becomes the wisdom of parliament to interpose between the rashness of the right hon. gentleman and the adoption of a system which it would endeavour to enforce; a system which goes to promote discord and resentment, where union and affection should be conciliated and confirmed; a system which aims at sowing dissention between the Commons and the Irish House of Peers; a system which traduces the character of the Irish parliament, as incapable to retrieve the country from the calamities under which it labours, and so weak as to be continually the dupe and sport of every English faction; a system, in a word, which is now endeavouring to array the British House of Commons against that of the sister kingdom. I have minutely attended to the right hon. gentleman's speech, and during the greater part of it I was inclined to suppose, either that a stranger had got into the House, or that the right hon. gentleman must have imagined himself in the Irish House of Commons and warmly engaged in a reply to Mr. Foster. Whether he had or had not the best of the argument, I will not stop to examine; but this I am safe in affirming, that the whole of this argument is nothing to the purpose; its great object seemed to be, to convict Mr. Foster of inconsistency on account of the line of conduct adopted by that gentleman in 1785. Mr. Foster indeed agreed, that the propositions then made might be necessary to prevent the commercial jealousies that subsisted between the two countries, from endangering a separation of that connexion which should indissolubly link them together. The right hon. gentleman himself was at the same time of the same opinion, and declared that he should look upon himself as a useless minister if he did not succeed in bringing it to bear. What is to be collected from this, but that both Mr. Foster and the right hon. gentleman sustained foolish opinions? for it turned out, that although the propositions did fail, the failure was not the means of introducing jealousies and suspicions between the two countries, nor of producing the resignation of the right hon. gentleman. If indeed he can show that the failure of the propositions has produced all those disasters which have since happened, all those scenes of distraction and rebellion which Ireland has since witnessed, then I admit the argument will be against Mr. Foster, but has he shown that to have been the case? Notwithstanding, however, all the right hon. gentleman's alarms lest these commercial jealousies should interrupt this connexion which he felt to be so essential, the question he is now so obstinately bent upon, has ever since been permitted to sleep. Mr. Foster, on that occasion, never touched on the subject of legislative independence; but he now contends that this independence is necessary to the commercial prosperity of Ireland. There is therefore no inconsistency in his present strain of argument, and consequently the whole of the objections urged against it by the right hon. gentleman must fall to the ground. But though the right hon. gentleman may not have succeeded in fixing the charge of inconsistency on Mr. Foster, the tendency of his speech has fully developed the system of corruption and intimidation by which the measure is to be carried. He says that the commercial advantages derived by Ireland from her connexion with this country, are necessary to her existence; and since, in the same breath, he adds, that to have those advantages continued to her, union is indispensable, the inference obviously is, that she must abandon all her commercial advantages, if she rejects the proffered alliance with Great Britain. Hence I contend that the people of Ireland cannot come with unbiassed minds to this discussion, and that a free choice is not left to

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the parliament of that country. He tells us that Ireland ought to consent to a union, because she is incapable of defending herself against her internal and external enemies without the assistance of her powerful neighbour—[Hear, hear!]—Mr. Sheridan insisted that the inference was irresistible—that unless she consented to a union, Ireland was to be deprived of all her commercial advantages. Is this generous? is it fit to hold out such language to Ireland? is it wise to press the discussion at this moment, and force all Ireland loudly to ask, "Why have not we had those advantages yielded to us, on which, according to the opinion of the British minister, our prosperity depends? We must owe it to the injurious policy of Great Britian, exercised in various acts of restraint and privation these three hundred years past, that we have been deprived of those advantages which God and nature so eminently adapts our country to afford us." But, Sir, let his majesty's ministers grant to Ireland those advantages of which they boast: they may be conceded to her without union; they can be improved by her without abjectly surrendering her independence. Thus much with regard to her means of acquiring distinction as a commercial nation. And as to her power of defending herself, does not the right hon. gentleman know that her volunteers have defended Ireland? And what they were equal to during the American war, when the enemy rode triumphant on their coasts, and in our channel, surely they are at present as capable of achieving in the zenith of our envied naval superiority. It is a most cruel taunt uttered in the face of the whole people of Ireland, to say, that while we have 40,000 British troops in the heart of their country, we will awe them by the presence of such a force; to reproach them with weakness, notwithstanding that we have had 200,000 of her best inhabitants to support us inthe present war, while 100,000 fighting men of their nation have fallen in our battles in the West Indies and elsewhere. What is this but to say, "It is true you have assisted us; but you are now naked; you are ignorant; you are uncivilized; you are weak; and if you do not accept from us the benefits we offer you, we will proceed to confer them upon you by force. Let us consider what the right hon. gentleman says, when he tells us he will leave it to the unbiassed judgment of the Irish people and the independent discretion of the Irish parliament finally to decide on the present question. Are the recent dismissals from office in that kingdom proofs of his settled purpose to leave it to that parliament to adopt or reject the measure? It is truly a mockery to tell the parliament this: parliament must see that what has been done in the case of individuals may be acted over again in the instance of the legislature; and that the same power which effected the dismissul of sir John Parnell, may be successfully employed to dissolve the parliament. Will gentlemen only reflect for a moment on the tendency of such proceedings? If in the parliament of the sister kingdom those measures are to be adopted, the same and a worse tyranny may be acted in our own. Sir, I am afraid the political creed of the adherents of the minister in Ireland has been adopted by his supporters in the British senate. I do sincerely believe, that if any one person who now supports ministers were to vote with me this night, he would be dismissed to-morrow from all his places. We are to reflect on these things, Sir, while we carry along our minds to that part of the right hon. gentleman's speech, where he peremptorily says, "I do think the measure good for Ireland and good for this country, but time shall be given to the people to examine it, time shall be given for their heats to subside, time shall be given to the parliament of the two countries fully and deliberately to discuss it." Now, Sir, what do these fine limbs of a sentence collectively mean? Why, that time is to be given for the operation of corruption, time to intimidate the people of Ireland, time for the peremptory dismissal of the opposers of the measures, time for the dissolution of parliament. Nor was it the right hon. gentleman alone who attempted to justify these measures. I have heard them also justified by an hon. friend (Mr. Canning); and never did I hear any thing with more poignant regret; for what sensation but that of sorrow and regret could arise in my mind, when I heard that hon. friend plead the cause of bold and barefaced corruption, and thus cloud and contaminate with its foul fog and baneful breath the pure and early morning of his political life? Would he now tell us that the right hon. gentleman had given a determined pledge, and could not recede? Why did he? Who called upon him to speak? Was it to encourage his friends in Ireland

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by a display of his resolution? But that was unavailing, as the discussion and decision took place there before that encouragement could reach them; but as to the charge of urging intimidation, neither the right hon. gentleman nor his hon. friend, who answered me on a former occasion, had thought proper to say a word. His hon. friend (Mr. Canning), from his parliamentary standing, could not, indeed, have taken any part in the violation of the compact in 1782; and therefore his right hon. friend, stepped generously forward and claimed all the shame, guilt, and treachery of it to himself. Like another Nisus he threw his broad shield over his beloved Euryalus to protect him from the vengeful resentment of the Irish nation, calling out to them—"Me, me, I, am the man, wreak all your vengeance upon me——

"Me, me, adsum qui feci; in me convertite ferrum,
O Rutuli; mea fraus omnis; nihil iste, nec ausus,
Nec potuit———"

My hon. friend's abilities might, however, prove that potuit; and as to his courage, he was satisfied the House had no reason to call in question. The generous ardour of the right hon. gentleman to protect his hon friend, was therefore only the impulse of affection. "Tantum infelicem nimium dilexit amicum." But the right hon. gentleman again repeats, that a union is the only remedy that can heal the evils that afflict Ireland, or that can secure the salvation of both countries: he must, therefore, persist in it, and call on parliament to assist him in the execution of the measure: he is willing, however, to wait for a more favourable opportunity, and until the Irish parliament is convinced of its necessity. And what is that opportunity he pretends to wait for? Is it not the day and hour when Ireland shall be in a greater degree of weakness? Does he wait until he can reproach her with her inability to defend herself, and threaten her with withdrawing those commercial favours she receives from England, and from which, he contends, are derived all the sources from which her prosperity arises? Alas! it is but too much in his power to create that moment! Mr. Sheridan then reminded the House of the shameful manner in which lord Fitzwilliam was recalled from Ireland at a moment when he was supposed to have been sent over to grant to the Roman Catholics the rights and privileges which they claimed. The cup of concession was just presented to their lips, but instead of permitting them to taste of it, it was dashed in their faces. Was this the proof of a sincere desire to reconcile the Catholic body? We all agree, as to the necessity of a connexion between the two countries, and that nothing could be more fatal to either than that Ireland should be possessed by the French. Should we not then seriously consider how far the enforcing of this measure may tend to favour the invasion of Ireland? Mr. Sheridan then proceeded to vindicate Mr. Fox from the accusation of not having followed up the resolution of 1782. Mr. Fox remained but two months after in office, and therefore could give it no effect, but did the right hon. gentleman himself, when he came afterwards into power, attempt to bring forward the objections which he had this night so triumphantly urged? Had he not now been fifteen years a minister without ever endeavouring to do that which, from the first, he deemed to be indispensably necessary? He has also affirmed, that an equal proportion of the Irish House of Commons, a large majority of the Irish Peers, and an equally large proportion of the people out of doors, were friendly to the measure of a union; but if he would look of what that division against it in the Commons was composed, he would discover that it contained almost all the country gentlemen; while those who composed the other side of the question would be almost all found to be under the influence of the crown. Now as to the large proportion of the people out of doors, who are said to be favourable to it, where were they to be found. He knew of no places but Cork and Limerick that had expressed any thing like approbation of it. But was there not a lure thrown out to the former, that they should have a dock yard built? and, on the other hand, was not the linen trade menaced with being deprived of some of the means that tended to encourage it? Thus, to gain his ends, he held out a bribe to the South, and threw out a threat against the North. Some inducements are also held out to the Roman Catholics; a diminution of tithes, and an establishment for their clergy. But what prevents these promises from being now realised? If it be right to do it, ought it not to be done whether a union takes place or not, and ought not parliament to

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be enabled, instead of holding out bribes and barter, to win by these concessions the affections and confidence of the Irish people? Another argument strongly urged in favour of the union, is the prosperity which Scotland is said to have enjoyed since it has been united with England. But might not Scotland have attained this increase of wealth and prosperity merely by the dint of her own industry? Besides, Scotland cannot well be compared with Ireland. In Scotland the gentlemen of property are fond to reside, and to encourage trade, &c.; in Ireland it is the reverse. It is also said, that two independent legislatures may seldom agree; and that from this want of concurrence and co-operation the most serious calamities may arise: as well say that two independent Houses of parliament may not co-operate; because the Lords, for example, may throw out a money bill sent from the Commons, or the Commons may refuse to concur in the amendments made by the Lords. The whole of these objections are completely refuted by experience; and to insist upon such objections, would be a libel on the constitution. French principles and Jacobinism were, as usual, introduced in the debate, and made the subject of splendid invective. But what was Jacobinism. Was it not Jacobinism that pretended to make other states more free, independent, and prosperous, than it found them? Was it not Jacobinism that called on other countries to resign their freedom, their independence, and their constitutions, with a promise to substitute something better in their place? If so, was not the right hon. gentleman, in proposing the present measure, acting the part of an arch-Jacobin? It is not my intention to oppose going into a committee, but I shall certainly object to your leaving the chair, for the purpose of moving two resolutions, which I shall, in case the propositions should be carried, wish to have placed before them, for the purpose of taking off, in some degree, that jealousy which the Irish parliament, I am afraid, will be apt to entertain of their passing this House, after the measure of union having been been so decidedly rejected in the House of Commons of Ireland. Mr. Sheridan then read the following Resolutions: "1. That no measures can have a tendency to improve and perpetuate the ties of amity and connexion now existing between Great Britain and Ireland, which have not for their basis the manifest, fair, and free consent and approbation of the parliaments of the two countries. 2. That whoever shall endeavour to obtain the appearance of such consent and approbation in either country, by employing the influence of government, for the purposes of corruption or intimidation, is an enemy to his majesty and to the constitution."

Lord *Hawkesbury* said, there were several parts of the hon. gentleman's speech which had made such an impression on his mind, that he could not but request the patience of the House while he made a few observations upon them. He well remembered the conduct of the hon. gentleman, who now deprecated all discussion as likely to produce the most mischievous effects upon the sister kingdom, upon a former occasion. He could not forget his conduct last session upon the question of Ireland. He then had no such tenderness for the independency of the Irish legislature as he now so earnestly professed. There was then none of that delicacy of trenching upon the independent province of the Irish parliament, which now formed so leading an argument. But, perhaps, there was something different in the situation of the country, at this time, to what it then was. True, it was so. At that time there existed a most atrocious rebellion, which now, if not totally subdued, was at least quelled in great part. There was also a difference in the effect of the propositions. An inquiry was last year called for, of which no one could see the end; and if the House had consented to go into it, they had no means of carrying the result of it into effect. But now, when peace was restored, and tranquillity afforded a fit opportunity for discussion, the hon. gentleman thought the matter so very delicate, that he refused his assent to all consideration of the measure this day brought forward, in compliance with the recommendation contained in his majesty's message.—The hon. gentleman had argued, that the measure was intended to be carried by intimidation; but if he had attended to the speech of his right hon. friend, he could not have used such an argument. In the very opening of it he had stated, that he hoped a full and dispassionate investigation would hereafter induce the people of Ireland to adopt it, from a conviction of the benefits attached to it. He had most positively denied all wish or desire to carry the measure by force; it was only upon consideration and

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conviction he hoped to see it adopted. The hon. gentleman had also assumed, that the people of Ireland were averse to the measure. Dublin, his lordship admitted, had shown symptoms of hostility to it; but, on the other hand, Cork had shown itself favourable. Limerick had also evinced itself friendly to the measure. In a question so important, there must inevitably arise much opposition from prejudice, partiality, and interest; nor was it until after repeated discussion, and dispassionate investigation, that it could expect to meet with a general approbation. Such was what was now desired, and the present mode was calculated to produce that effect. It was desirous that the Irish nation, when they opened their eyes, might see the advantages resulting from the proposition.—The hon. gentleman had stated, that there had been attempts to carry the measure by flagrant corruption; and he founded his assertion upon the dismissal or resignation of certain gentlemen from their offices. If certain gentlemen had quitted their offices, because they did not agree with administration, was it therefore to be imputed to government that they determined to carry the measure by corruption or intimidation? Was it not usual for gentlemen to leave official situations when they found they could not give their assent to the measures of administration? Was it any disgrace to them to do so? No man thought it other than acting an honourable part. The argument came also with particular ill grace from the hon. gentleman, who, in the case of earl Fitzwilliam, had protested against his recall, because he had removed from the administration those persons who had not his confidence.—Would you, said he, recall a lord lieutenant because he acted in the fair exercise of his discretion, by removing those in whom he could not repose confidence? How could a minister show himself in earnest in his recommendation of any great political measure, if he was indifferent as to the opinions of his friends, and said, "I care not how you vote on the question, though I think it of the last importance?" No; a minister must ensure the support of those who acted with him, and not trust a matter of such national magnitude to the chance of losing it. It would not be possible for government to go on, unless the members who composed the administration agreed in their plan of operations. He agreed with the hon. gentleman in deprecating the system by which Ireland had heretofore been governed. If we looked at the history of that country, we should find that no attempt had been made to ameliorate the condition of it, until the government of the undertakers were abolished, before which time a great part of Ireland was literally in a state of degradation and civil bondage; all the advantages of Ireland were to be dated from that hour. With respect to the final settlement of 1782, it was impossible not to see that that measure furnished a strong argument in favour of the present one. It was impossible not to see that that measure was not, nor could not be, the final adjustment between the two countries. He had always considered it as an unwise and imperfect measure, because it struck him, that either it went too far, or not far enough. It did not stop the wounds of the country, and accordingly not long afterwards an act of renunciation was called for, during lord Northington's administration of the government of Ireland, and the right of hearing Irish appeals was abandoned in express terms.—The hon. gentleman next came to the consideration of the commercial prosperity of Ireland. Of this the hon. gentleman attributed the cause to the declaration of independence. He was not a member of the House at the time of the commercial propositions; but he was present in the gallery at the time, and heard the discussion; and he recollected that, upon that occasion, his right hon. friend manfully and willingly gave to Ireland a large and liberal portion of all the commercial advantages enjoyed in this country. The general argument against them at first was, that it was giving away the commerce of this country; and it was not till afterwards that they were attacked on the ground of touching upon the independence of Ireland, and, on the discussion of the 4th Resolution, were opposed by the hon. gentleman, or at least by those who acted with him, on the ground of their being highly injurious to the manufacturing and commercial interests of this country. Petitions were likewise sent from every manufacturing town in the kingdom to the same effect. But, thank Heaven! that narrow-minded policy was now abandoned.—The next point which struck upon the attention was, the question of the regency. There was one point upon which they all agreed, the necessity of a unity in the executive government to

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preserve the connexion between the countries, and the unity of the empire. Upon that occasion, however, they acted upon a different principle. Had it not been for an accident, the Irish parliament would have conferred the regency upon one person, and the English parliament upon another; so that, instead of being two legislatures acting under one executive head, as by the settlement of 1782 they were to do, they would have been acting under two different executive heads; and he thought the inferences on this point, drawn by his right hon. friend, were conclusive and unanswerable. It might also hereafter happen, that in case of an infant, there might be a long minority; in that case also, the executive power might be severed in the two countries; in which case, the integrity of the empire would be lost. Consider the inconvenience of the present system to the British empire; her operations were crippled, and her force diverted, for the support of Ireland. It was said also, that since the year 1782, Ireland, in consequence of the independence of her parliament, has been increasing in riches and prosperity, and if so, it furnished a strong argument in favour of the present measure. If the defects of that country were not removed by increase of prosperity aad riches, it was a proof that the internal system was defective, and must be remedied from without. There existed the most deadly feuds between the Catholics and Protestants. Religious sects were inflamed against each other by political animosities; in short, the state of the country was such as to be a weapon in the hands of those who were hostile to the British empire. By this measure, it was proposed to melt the whole down into one mass composing the British empire. That would do away the causes of the differences. It would quiet the alarms of the Catholics, and secure the property of the Protestants. It would add security to the property of Ireland, and equally tend to the satisfaction of the other party. He was convinced that the grievance the most galling to the Catholics was, not in the exclusion from the few places of trust and emolument, but their feelings, which were wounded. This, under an imperial parliament, would not be the case; the rancour and animosity of parties would decay, and at length totally die away. With respect to the people of Ireland, let them see for a moment how they were constituted. They were made up of two distinctions, Catholics and Protestants. The first were supposed to out-number the Protestants in the proportion of two-thirds, or, as some said, of four-fifths of the whole of the inhabitants of the sister kingdom. The Catholics were chiefly the tenants and peasantry of the country, and the Protestants, who were most of them British settlers in Ireland, were the men of property. The latter would have their wishes gratified, and their interests and ambition served in the best way of being promoted, and he believed the Catholics, who were the original natives of Ireland, would be equally pleased. It had been said frequently that the exasperation of the Roman Catholics against the Protestants was chiefly owing to the religious disputes; but his opinion was, that it was in a great measure owing to the being excluded from seats in a Protestant parliament in Ireland, in the hands of which all their interests were entrusted. When the parliament was removed, and the whole interests of Ireland placed under the protection of one imperial parliament, held in the seat of the empire, their pride would be flattered, and the cause of their jealousy and exasperation being no longer under their eyes, those feelings would be at an end. If it had been proved that since the year 1782, Ireland had increased in prosperity, tranquillity, and internal peace. It might then be said, that there existed no necessity for the present measure; but if, after sixteen years trial, it had produced no good effect, it induced him to resort to the test of experience, and look into the history of other countries where different plans had been adopted. In Scotland we saw the beneficial effects resulting from the Union. From that period they had increased in prosperity, wealth, and commerce. Hume, Robertson, and Adam Smith, had all attributed this increase of prosperity to the Union; and when he compared this with the disadvantageous effects from disunion, as in the case of Ireland, he could not but be convinced of the great utility of the measure. He therefore put it to the people of Ireland, and to the people of England, whether experience itself did not call for the adoption of the measure? The great advantages of the measure would be on the side of Ireland. How stood they at present? He recollected, that on a motion for papers in the Irish House, Mr. Grattan

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declared that Ireland must stand or fall with Great Britain: he objected to the production, though he thought they ought to be produced, if it were not that Ireland ought to follow Great Britain. How would that case stand after a union? At present they must blindly follow wherever Great Britain led the way; but in the latter case, they would have a deliberative voice in the imperial parliament. This was a strong reason; and the only answer was, the inconvenience of members attending their duty in this country; but he thought it would be far from weakening the connexion between the members and their constituents. The hon. gentleman had said that the having a given number of lords spiritual and temporal, and members of the House of Commons, sent from Ireland to the British metropolis, would naturally wean them from their native country, by enticing them to make England the chief place of their residence. This he thought a strange argument, because the operation and necessary effect of the said Lords and Commons being obliged to come over here for a few months of the year, would naturally make them more eager to return to their own estates on the other side of the channel, at the end of the session, in order to cultivate the good opinion and confidence of their constituents, increase and maintain their influence, and preserve their weight and dignity among them; and this would be more necessary, as it would be of infinitely greater importance to them to become members of an imperial parliament, than it was at present to be chosen members of the parliament of Ireland; and more especially when induced by motives of laudable ambition, they were anxious to manifest their talents where they could be best appreciated, by which means they could hope to rise to the first offices of honour and emolument in the public service. See also what effect it would have upon the proprietors of Irish lands, who were also land proprietors in this country. At present many did not think their Irish property worth much attention or cultivation: but from a union it would be obvious that their interest would induce them to cultivate their Irish property, not merely for interest, but for the consequent influence and authority it would bestow. He therefore could not consider it as a measure likely to increase the absentees from that kingdom. When he viewed the prosperity of this kingdom under the united parliament; when he saw the rapid advances we made after the last peace, when we had lost our colonies, and the most sanguine amongst us only hoped that we might do well; when he saw that alarm give way at the beginning of this war to a new alarm, namely, that we were become too commercial; and lastly, when, in the course of this war, he contemplated the brilliant successes which had attended upon our arms, he could not but impute these to the superior advantages of our constitution. The blessings of that constitution he sincerely wished to see attached to other countries, and more particularly to the sister kingdom. Another source of our happiness also arose from our habits, customs, and manners. Ireland had the same government, but she differed from us in those particulars; and if once, in addition to our constitution, we added our manners and habits, the Irish might hereafter rise to the same prosperous state, and bless the men who first proposed the change. Last year he had stated that the rebellion in Ireland originated in a Jacobin conspiracy; the fact now stood proved upon the confession of one who was formerly a friend of the hon. gentleman. This furnished another strong argument for the union. In short, every thing called for it. It was his wish that the people of both countries should contemplate the measure dispassionately, and decide upon it. If, however, it ultimately failed, he had rather this proposition had been made than not; it would be the means of recording upon the Journals a lasting monument of what the House were willing to advance to promote the interests of Ireland, and give additional strength and security to the empire.

Dr. *Laurence* said, that those gentlemen were accused of inconsistency who supported the motions respecting Ireland last year, and opposed that which was now before the House. But was there no difference, now and then, between the relative situation of the two countries? His majesty's ministers last year came down and informed parliament, that a rebellion was raging in Ireland, and proposed that we should aid the sister kingdom, with the military power and pecuniary resources of Great Britain. Was it then inconsistent with the duty of that House to inquire, as an hon. gentleman had proposed that the House should inquire, into the justice of that cause, which was to be supported

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with the troops and treasures of their constituents? Was it inconsistent with the duty of that House to declare, as a noble lord (George Cavendish) had proposed that the House should declare, what principles alone they would concur to maintain in the government of Ireland; principles which no man had ventured to negative, and some of which it was the avowed object of the projected union to carry more effectually into execution? In what manner did either of those motions interfere with the just authority of the independent Irish parliament? How did they resemble the present question, the scope of which is to obtain from that House a declaration, that it is advisable utterly, and for ever to annihilate that independent parliament.

He should have forborne to vote the other night, had there been a division upon the amendment which was moved to the address. It was not, however, that he did not in a great degree feel the force of those arguments by which it was recommended. He should have heartily joined to deprecate, at the present moment, the discussion of any sort of union between the two countries, had it not been manifestly impracticable to prevent it then, when it was most likely to produce mischief: since his majesty's message intimated that a similar communication had been at the same time made from the Irish throne. Neither did he entirely agree with the hon. gentleman who moved the amendment, that such were the circumstances of the sister kingdom, as to render any thing like a free consent to the measure absolutely impossible; though he did believe them to be such, as to make it the duty of the House to examine with a most scrupulous nicety into any expression of such consent. But now we are acquainted with the proceedings of that parliament. It was not merely a majority of five as some gentlemen seem willing to represent it, that had refused even to take the measure into consideration. Of whom was that majority composed? In it was to be found a most decisive majority of those who represent the landed interest. Let the other names also be compared, and no man can hesitate to say on which side appeared much the larger portion of whatever is most respectable for birth, for talents, and for public integrity, among the Commons of Ireland. But it was not necessary to have recourse to any invidious details upon that subject. What was the argument reported to have been used in favour of the union, by one (Mr. Conolly) the purity of whose principles, and the rectitude of whose intentions, must be acknowledged even by those who may differ from his opinions? He is said to have stated, and to have stated without contradiction, that there had been at one period no less than 116 placemen and pensioners in that House which he addressed; and from these he seemed to infer that independence was a thing a little too costly for the purse of poor Ireland. Here then was room enough both for corruption and intimidation; the corruption of those who might be induced by the hope of power or emolument, to prefer their interest to their conviction; the intimidation of those who now holding office, might be deterred by the fear of dismission from obeying the genuine dictates of their feelings, or their judgment.

The fact was notorious, that more than one person in high situation had been dismissed, and others had been menaced, for their honest avowal of their sentiments against this measure. This had now been admitted; this had been justified; this had been compared to those changes which lord Fitzwilliam had endeavoured to make in that country. The noble lord who had just spoken, had charged inconsistency upon those who had formerly defended that purpose of lord Fitzwilliam (for it was only a purpose; he was recalled for the attempt) yet who now arraigned the conduct of government on the present occasion; yet in reality what two cases could be more unlike? The lord lieutenant of that day, having no confidence in those who compose the Irish cabinet, and agreeing with them in no one general principle, which was to form the basis of all his measures, designed by such arrangements as were necessary for that purpose, to bring into power those men with whom he did for the most part agree in all the great outlines of their policy, and who together with his confidenc, did then undoubtedly enjoy that of their country. These arrangements were not even intended to have been effected in any hostile manner. The nation was willing to pay the price of them, and that price had, in many instances, been settled by those who were to have received it, but lord Fitzwilliam soon found a resistance, which he had not been led to expect. One person in parti-

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cular, whose conduct in an office of secondary rank, had long disgusted all who approached him (the reputed author of that pamphlet, which the other night was so severely and so justly stigmatized, and which hitherto no man had been hardy enough to vindicate, much less to approve), presumed to tell the lord lieutenant, that to teach him exceeded his power, that it was contrary to the terms by which he possessed the lieutenancy from the English minister. Was this to be tolerated? Was an inferior secretary to be viceroy over the viceroy? But, viewed, in whatever light you please, the dismissals, which were intended by lord Fitzwilliam, what were they but the ordinary changes in a government, which is to be conducted upon a new principle by a new governor? The present question was not in its nature and never ought to be made what is called a government measure. It had nothing to do with the general principles of policy in an Irish government. If it had succeeded, it would at once have extinguished all local policy and local government in that country: and failing it could leave nothing behind that should hinder those who might on other points agree from still continuing to act together in perfect confidence and concord. It was a question the effect of which would be vitiated in its very origin, if the influence of government were to be in any degree apparent in procuring its adoption then. It was a question for the union of two nations, which ought to meet by affection, and if they did not, it signified very little by what parchment bonds they might be united. The more closely minds whose inclinations did not sympathize, were drawn together by such bonds, the farther, in truth, were they kept asunder, as to any beneficial and happy consequences from the connexion.

Was there any man who imagined that in the present temper of Ireland, the measure could be brought to a fortunate issue? Was it hoped that a majority could yet be procured by intimidation or corruption? If there should hereafter be any favourable opportunity for bringing forward the question again, why could not that be done as it now had been, by a message from his majesty, without the interference of the British parliament? What was to be gained by going into a committee and passing the resolutions which have been opened to the House? There was not a single word in them that could remove any one jealousy entertained by the parliament and the people of Ireland. The expediency and almost the necessity, of destroying for ever the independent legislature of that kingdom, as asserted in the very out-set, while the commercial and financial regulations are expressed in such general terms, so many references are made to future details, and so much is reserved for the cognizance of the united parliament, at a period yet to be defined, that it is totally impossible for human sagacity to guess, what good or what evil the ultimate provisions may contain. Useless, therefore, to strengthen the prerogative of the crown, and useless to allay the irritation of the public mind in the sister kingdom, these resolutions, if they should be passed, would only serve to commit the two parliaments, and to hold forth the Commons of Great Britain as the principle and determined enemies of the Commons of Ireland. The alarms of his majesty's loyal subjects in that distracted country, could never settle into any thing like tranquillity, while such a declaration from such an authority was hung up in terror over their heads. Now what had there followed the victory of the majority? A very considerable part of them had immediately professed themselves ready still to support the general measures of government. Was it then commonly prudent to force such men, whether they would or no, into a nearer and more permanent connexion with those, who were more directly hostile to the present administration? He did not profess any personal attachment to the power of the right hon. gentleman. He had supported him, and he should support him steadily, while, in this arduous conflict, he appeared in no respect to betray the duty which he owed to his country; but if he were one of the right hon. gentleman's private friends he would above all things entreat him to desist, for the present, at least from urging forward a project, which would more and more embarrass him every step he should advance.

Much reliance seemed to have been placed both by the noble lord, and by the right hon. gentleman, on a resolution which had passed that House in 1782. They appeared to consider it as something of an authority in their favour. It had been explained by an hon. gentleman, whose official situation at the time afforded him indubitable means of knowledge, to have alluded only to commercial regula-

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tions. But (Dr. L. said) he had himself received a different explanation of it from an illustrious friend of his, now no more, whose pre-eminent abilities had been for many years the admiration of that House, of the kingdom, of Europe, and the whole civilized world, whose wonderful endowments yielded to nothing but the benevolence of his heart, and his pure, his ardent, his enlightened love of his country. That great statesman (Mr. Burke) to the last moment of his existence, regretted that however just and irresistible he thought the demand, he had not, nevertheless, opposed the recognition of Irish independence, without that clear exposition, which he believed the succeeding resolution to have meant, of the new situation in which the two countries were then placed with regard to each other. Yet he never had in contemplation any such measure as the present. On the contrary, it was his opinion, that the two countries had now grown up, under circumstances which did not admit of such an incorporation. But what he desired was, that the connexion of the sister kingdoms should be reduced to a positive compact; that the manner should be explicitly defined, in which Ireland, with the entire and absolute power of local legislation, as far as she now enjoys it, should be bound on impartial questions of peace and war (according to the sentiment quoted from a speech of Mr. Grattan, at the commencement of the present hostilities,) to stand or fall with the fortunes of Great Britain. Too well was he acquainted with human nature, not to be aware, that in times of tranquillity the letter of such a stipulation would be unnecessary, and that in times of extreme irritation and mutual animosity, if such should unhappily occur, it would be liable to be disregarded: but there are doubtful and tremulous moments in the fate of every empire, when he judged that it might be useful to have that, which is now the feeling of all, confirmed and fixed by the guarantee of the national faith. Nothing beyond this did he ever understand to have been designed by any man, who was a party to the resolution of 1782.

The commercial propositions of 1785, had also been introduced into this debate. The argument drawn from thence by the chancellor of the exchequer, and his insinuation of inconsistency in the Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, had been already answered to his complete satisfaction. But the noble lord had reasoned from them in a very singular manner. He threw it out as an imputation against the opposition of that day, that they had not, till a very late period of that discussion, objected to the scheme, as an infringement on the independent constitution of Ireland. It was certainly true. But was that to be pressed as a charge of inconsistency, or was it to be construed into an implied admission, that the project itself was not contrary to the adjustment of 1782? The fact would apply in neither way. That proposition, or rather that limitation annexed to one of the propositions on which the objection arose, was introduced here to obviate the alarms which had been expressed by the British manufacturers in their petitions and evidence at the bar of the House, and surely the noble lord would have the candour not to infer very much from the silence of members, if they had not anticipated censure on the minister, and reprehended terms in a treaty, which had then no existence; which had been never hinted; which had even been strenuously contended to be unnecessary; though the right hon. gentleman, who had so contended, afterwards proposed them himself.

The late rebellion, it had been asserted, made the projected union necessary. He should not then enter upon that topic in the extent which its magnitude might seem to deserve. The evidence which his majesty had been pleased to communicate to his parliament, was still before the select committee, which had not yet produced any report. He could not however, suffer the representations of the noble lord on that head to remain for a single night uncontradicted. The rebellion had not solely sprung from the dissemination of French principles. There had undoubtedly existed in that country, from the latter end of the year 1791, a knot of conspirators, whose aim it had been to separate Ireland from Great Britain. He had himself, on all occasions and especially in the debates of the last session, avowed his belief of that conspiracy. But it had never been in itself formidable. It had dwindled; it had died away; it had become in a manner extinct, whenever a hope had been given of any practically good government: It had revived; it had increased in size: it had gathered strength, whenever any misconduct of the government had prepared the

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way for the artifices of the agitators to operate with more effect on the minds of the people. Above all things, we should not hastily give credit to the cry, which had been no less wickedly than falsely, attempted to be raised, that it drew its origin in any considerable degree from religious animosities. He had taken some trouble to inform himself of the truth. In the north, he knew on the most indubitable authority, that hardly a single Catholic was concerned in the insurrection. All of that religious persuasion were almost to a man, loyal and zealous in behalf of that constitution, from the full participation of which they are to this moment excluded. The disaffection in that quarter, was in a great measure, confined to the Protestant dissenters, the descendants of those soldiers, whom Oliver Cromwell settled in the lands of which he had dispossessed the ancient proprietors. Among the insurgents in Kildare, Catholics and Protestants were mingled in nearly the same proportions which they bear to each other in the general proportion of the country: but in their language, and their pretexts, nothing of a religious aspect and complexion was discernible. In Wexford alone, the rebellion did assume that character, because in that county and the adjacent districts, party violence had previously run high between the opposite sects; yet even there, the five principal leaders who suffered under the just severity of the law, were all members of the established church. Of whatever kind were the local discontents of the people, the conspirators, with malignant dexterity, wrought them to their purpose; and there was one thing which generally inflamed and ulcerated the feelings of the lower classes, —the system of rigour and coercion, which, it is now proved by the solemn investigation of the two Houses in Ireland, had long preceded that treasonable arming of the conspirators, which has been falsely argued as the justification of so doubtful a departure from the great standing rules of civil policy.

It was not his intention to follow the noble lord into his panegyric on the measure itself. It was not necessary in that stage, it did not seem to be necessary in any stage of the business, that he and others, who like him, looked upon the time and the temper lately manifested in the sister kingdom, to be insuperable objections, should debate whether this, or any other mode of union, might or might not, under different circumstances, be conducive to the strengthening and consolidating of the empire. He must, however, remark, that the chancellor of the exchequer had, with his usual perspicuity, distinguished two very dissimilar modes, one a federal, the other an incorporating union. The former admitted of much variety, in the nature, scope, and extent of its provisions and stipulations. The latter was more simple, as it was more compliant. Of the former description, were the ulterior measures, which were supposed to have been intimated in the prospective resolution of 1782. Of the same description were the commercial propositions, introduced under the auspices of the right hon. gentleman in 1785. Of the latter description was the plan on which he now stood committed, in the face of his country, and which he had solemnly engaged to make it the great object of his political existence to effect. Should any scheme of union come recommended by the full, the free, the uninfluenced, the unequivocal consent and approbation of the Irish parliament and the Irish people, he would give it an attentive and dispassionate consideration: nevertheless, he must fairly acknowledge, that he did entertain very great doubts indeed whether, under any circumstances, an incorporating union would be expedient for the general weal. He certainly acceded to the sentiment of the right hon. gentleman, that it was impossible to speak as a true Englishman, without speaking also as a true Irishman, or as an Irishman, without holding at the same time, the language of an Englishman; yet it was the duty of each to consult in the first place, the interests of that country to which he immediately belonged; and of the sister kingdom only in the second place, in so much as through that the common interests of the whole empire may be affected. Looking, therefore, not with the narrow jealousy of local prejudice, but as a member of the empire, at some of the commercial arrangements contained in the intended resolutions, he could not but warn the House and the country against speculating too rashly on the beneficial consequences so munificently promised, from the circulation of British capital in Ireland. Cork was the only city, which had hitherto declared in favour of the union. What did this indicate? Was it not that Cork, above all other places, ex-

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pected to profit by the measure? Would it then be so clearly useful for the empire at large, that any considerable portion of British trade should be transferred to Cork, and perhaps to Kinsale, to Limerick, and other ports on the coasts of Munster, where that province contracts itself, as it approaches the south western point of the island? He did not wish to deprive Ireland of any advantage, which she might draw from the natural opportunities of her situation, improved by her own proper resources; but would it be wise, artificially to collect and accumulate the merchandizes and wealth of Great Britain in a distant extremity of the king's domestic dominions, in a small space, peculiarly accessible on different sides, incapable of being sufficiently fortified for defence, and more immediately exposed to the attack from the principal naval station of the enemy? Was there a military man who would choose to place his magazines in an outpost similarly circumstanced? This branch of the argument he did not mean at present to push so far as it might easily be pressed; but he did throw it out as not undeserving the serious attention of the House.

That part of the proposed union which touched the constitution of parliament, he considered as of much higher importance and more anxious concern. The endeavours, which had been so frequently made, to render the representation of the people, the ancient foundation on which that House was built, and on which it had stood secure for ages, had sometimes induced him to analyse and study the different parts of which the august fabric is composed. It existed, such as it was and such as it had become, from the concurring operations of wisdom, fortune, and time, combining all interests of the community in a manner reducible to no exact rule of theory, yet affording a practical result, that corresponded with the most perfect theory to a wonderful degree of precision He had found it to be so in the present parliament. He had divided the whole representation into four classes;—the first, of counties;—the second, of cities, county towns, and other places of the largest population and most extensive franchises;—the third, of boroughs containing such a number of votes as to render them generally, what are called, open boroughs, though some of them may be accidentally liable to particular influence;—and in the fourth class he placed all that remained. It was then his object to examine, whether any one of these classes prodominated in the minorities of that House. With this view he had diligently scrutinized the lists, which are sometimes taken on momentary questions, when on both sides there is the greatest muster of strength. He had checked those lists again by striking out those who commonly voted on the other side, and inserting others who had been absent, but whose sentiments he knew. And in what did his inquiries terminate? In the conviction, he had almost said in the demonstration, that if any one sort of representation should be preferred to the exclusion of the rest, and a new parliament be chosen under such a new right of suffrage, there would be no material alteration in the votes of that House.

Now, would the conclusion be the same, if one hundred Irish members should be added to the representation? He would answer by acknowledging, that in the estimate which he had made, he had found himself under the necessity of wholly omitting the members from Scotland. Why did he so? Because they were found to go, almost unanimously, with government. It was far from his intention to disparage the representatives of that part of Great Britain. He thought it in some measure their duty to pursue that conduct. It was so that other minor interests and local connexions acted in that House; it was so that men ever would act, who were sent, few among many, with the charge of protecting and benefitting any distinct and separate body of the people. They could only compromise with power, which they were not able to resist. They must obtain the support which they wanted, by giving that which they could themselves bestow.

Would Ireland, then, be in such a situation, as would probably induce her hundred members to maintain the same general concert amoag themselves, and throw their weight into the same scale? Undoubtedly she would. Many very important regulations in commerce and revenue were to be settled, at first only for a limited period, and would return to be discussed anew from time to time in the united parliament. The representatives from Ireland would be impelled by the force of circumstances to follow in the track of those from Scotland. The latter, in his opinion, did not form a body greater than, in the present debility of all

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the old governments, it might be useful to the public service, or at least consistent with the public safety, to leave under the influence of the crown. But would any man venture to assert, that the question would remain the same if a hundred more of a similar description were to be thrown into the number. And his alarms on this head were not a little increased when he recollected what was the influence of the crown at present in the sister kingdom, extending to many more than the proposed addition to the Commons of Great Britain.—Suppose, however, that the new members should take a course contrary to all common experience of similar bodies. They were justly allowed by the chancellor of the exchequer to be of a nation distinguished for abilities. Lures too had been thrown out to their ambition by a splendid display of imperial honours and imperial power, which they might attain by those arts which lead to pre-eminence in free states. And certainly they were by no means deficient in the great popular talent of eloquence. But if they should hereafter exercise it within these walls, in any degree corresponding with the example which they have lately given in their own proper theatre, where they continued in very animated debate for little less than the complete circle of a day and night, he was apprehensive that we might find the public business a little impeded in its progress. Put even the most favourable case; suppose them to divide on one side and the other, nearly in the same relative proportion in which English members now espouse the opposite parties; suppose them not to protract the debates with one single observation; yet would any man practically acquainted with that House deny, that the consequent difference of the actual numbers in every majority would have a very different effect in public opinion. The House, to any purpose of a national council expressing the general will, would no longer be the same; its character would be changed; the confidence of the people would be hazarded; and a new argument, infinitely stronger than any which had yet been produced in favour of innovation, would be furnished to those, who, some honestly, and some as a pretext for worse designs, wished to alter the parliamentary constitution of these realms.

In every discussion of the present measure, in all that had been said, and all that had been written to recommend it, within doors and without, our attention was always called to the happy effect of the union with Scotland. But the noble lord had used that topic rather unfairly, because, while he had attributed the prosperity of Scotland during the current century to her having ceased to be an independent kingdom, he had denied that the rapid prosperity of Ireland, since the year 1782, was at all to be ascribed to her having then become an independent kingdom. Dr. Laurence gave it as his opinion, that one assertion was as good as the other, and that neither of them was satisfactory. It was an old trite fallacy, long since exploded in the schools, to reason, that whatever happened after some particular event, was produced by that event. We must go much deeper into an investigation of all the circumstances attending the two countries before we can justly get to a conclusion, that the union of one with England, or the independence of the other has occasioned, what we hear of both with equal delight. —But there was one point of view in which he would advise ministers seriously to look at the union with Scotland. We were then engaged, as we are now, in a war against the ambition of France. But then not only was the marine of the enemy crippled, his military power also was broken; he was reduced to the defence of his own territories against the victorious allies under the conduct of the illustrious Marlborough. Mr. Dundas appearing to express some dissent across the House, Dr. Laurence acknowledged that he did not come prepared for this debate, but believed himself to be correct. In 1705, when the treaty which led to the union was set on foot, though Marlborough had but commenced that brilliant career, which shook the throne of Louis 14th to its foundation, yet he had gained the first decisive battles which fixed the fortune of the war. Nevertheless such were the discontents and heart-burnings which the union excited in North Britain, that when the French, encouraged by their intelligence from that quarter, soon after made a feeble attempt to invade it, had they not accidentally missed the opportunity of landing at Leith, it was confessed at the time that they would without difficulty have made themselves masters of the whole country. Compare our situation now. No man was less inclined than himself to undervalue our late splendid victories, than which none shone

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more brightly in the annals of our naval glory: but he would not dangerously delude his country with the hope of a speedy and fortunate issue to the present tremendous contest. We must persevere with steady fortitude, because till the enemy had manifested very different principles and very different dispositions from any which had yet appeared, in no other than vigorous counsels was there either honour or safety. We had, however, hitherto achieved nothing that could establish our security. Had we now, as at the time of the union with Scotland, triumphant allies on the continent? Did the league against the gigantic power of France now, as then, receive every day new accessions of strength? Were our foes now, as then, exhausted with recruiting their defeated and dispirited armies for the defence of their own frontiers? The contrary of all this was too notoriously the fact. Europe still trembled at the genius of France. The grand alliance which had for a short time attempted to stem the torrent, had been dissolved in its own weakness. The requisitions of the hostile republic still forced thousands and hundreds of thousands into the field for the destruction of the surrounding states: and she still possessed in her own ports and those of the confederated republics and dependent monarchies, the wrecks of a navy sufficient to waft over the troops, whose lives their tyrannical masters were ever ready to lavish on any desperate enterprise.

Repeated attempts had been made upon Ireland with various success; and we had every reason to believe, that those attempts would be again and again renewed. Would it not then be sound policy, while we repressed with a strong and steady hand every discontent that assumed the appearance of insurrection, at the same time to conciliate, as far as we could, the affections of the sister kingdom? Ought we not at least in common prudence to abstain from adding new discontents to those which already were too ripe? But what was the peculiar character of the present question? The agitation of it had excited, and the continuance of it would perpetuate new discontents;—discontents which began to operate in the community there, just at the very point, where the operation of the old discontents terminated. The lower classes in Ireland, it must not be concealed, were too generally disaffected from a multitude of concurring causes. But the late rebellion had been crushed, by a junction of all the higher orders of every religious persuasion, and by the loyalty and energy of the yeomanry and other volunteer forces, whose meritorious exertions had received a testimony no less just than eloquent in the panegyric pronounced upon them by the chancellor of the exchequer, and whose own courage alone, he had confessed, might have ultimately succeeded in repelling the dangers with which they were threatened, though after a more severe struggle, and a longer duration of confusion and slaughter. Yet they, whohad been thus highly extolled, were the very persons who were now more immediately disgusted. Above all, he must remind the House, that there existed in Ireland a powerful party, the principles of which he did not approve; and the violence of which, indeed, he considered as having had a most mischievous effect in driving the Catholic peasantry into the arms of the conspirators, yet which professed the most ardent zeal for the connexion with Great Britain, and on that connexion built their own political influence and importance;—he alluded to what is called the Orange party. That party, however, had been the foremost, and the loudest in the cry against the union; while on the other hand, no one considerable body of Catholics, or of any other description had been gained to its support.

In such a situation of that distracted country, with so decided an expression of the general sense against any union, and with such pernicious effects following from the bare mention of the measure, he, who, without going into any question of abstract competency, thought it to be peculiarly a measure, which should have in some way or other the direct or the implied concurrence of the people as well as the parliament, and who believed it to be so dangerous to our own constitution, as that under any circumstances he should approve the actual discussion of it with fear and trembling, could not hesitate to give his vote against proceeding any farther in the consideration of his majesty's message. For these reasons he should oppose the speaker's leaving the chair, for some of these reasons also he should stop there, and decline giving his voice for the preliminary resolutions, of which an hon. gentleman had given notice. He could not be supposed to object to them

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in point of principle, when the noble lord himself had found them so far unobjectionable. But if they should be carried, and the committee should then pause, there would stand on the records of the House, some declarations which, however moderate, pointed towards a union; and there would appear sufficiently intelligible traces of a censure on the conduct of government in the late dismissals, which, he trusted, would yet be retracted on the one side, and forgotten on the other, that nothing might remain to rankle, and keep alive the animosities, to which the speech from the throne had unhappily given birth in the sister-kingdom.

The question being put, That his majesty's Message be referred to the consideration of a committee of the whole House, the House divided:

Tellers.

YEAS	Lord Hawkesbury - - Mr. Douglas - - - -	140
NOES	Mr. Sheridan - - - - Mr. St. Andrew St. John	15

The House accordingly resolved itself into the committee: Mr. Douglas in the chair. The resolutions having been read in the committee, the House was resumed, and the committee obtained leave to sit again on Thursday.

Feb. 7. On the order of the day being read for the House to resolve itself into a committee, to consider further of his Majesty's Message respecting the proposed union with Ireland,

Mr. *Sheridan* said:—Having on the two former occasions, in which the present subject was under discussion, trespassed a good deal on the attention of the House, I feel it incumbent upon me to take up as little of their time as possible now. I shall therefore only urge a few of the many reasons which might be advanced in support of the resolutions I intend to move. Indeed, I think it the more incumbent on me to say less at present than I otherwise should, because though at the commencement of the debates on this measure I had the singularity of standing alone in opposition to the right hon. gentleman's project, yet several gentlemen knowing the irritation produced in the public mind by the agitation of this question, and knowing the marked disapprobation the mere suggestion of the measure has received from the Irish parliament, are now as much convinced as I am of the impropriety of continuing to discuss it here. This consideration I should have hoped would have had some weight with the right hon. gentleman, and have taught him not to persist in the pledge which he so boldly gave in the course of the first debate on this subject. The right hon. gentleman declared, that to accomplish a union of the two kingdoms should be the object of his life. The House will, however, do well to pause before they advance farther. The question now before us is, whether we are willing to second the pledge which the right hon. gentleman has given? The right hon. gentleman has before now duped the people with his pledges, and he may, perhaps, think proper at last to abandon this. Be that as it may, nothing could so much tend to increase the evils which at present exist in Ireland, as this House sanctioning the present pledge of the right hon. gentleman.

The effect of that pledge must be considerable on the people of Ireland. It will produce much irritation, and inflame all those discontents which have already occasioned so much misery in that country. If adopted by this House, the mischief would be still greater. It is difficult to conceive what object he proposes to himself by proceeding in this measure. What advantage will his argument of the necessity of a union receive from the House joining in his pledge, when the Irish House of Commons has already decided against it? If the House sanctions the project of the right hon. gentleman the two Houses of Commons of Great Britain and Ireland will be placed in opposition to each other, and the situation of these kingdoms will be more alarming, than that in which any two countries professing amity for each other ever before stood. Does the right hon. gentleman not know, that while he declares his determination to persist in this measure, the Irish will fancy they can penetrate the means to which he will resort to carry it? If he do not succeed on the present occasion, they must be convinced that he only waits for a moment when Ireland shall be more weak to carry his favourite project, and that intimidation and corruption are the engines he proposes to use. But it ought to be recollected, that the Irish parliament do not look upon their connexion with us as a boon—they claim to be independent. If, then, the right hon. gentleman has sincerely pledged himself,

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there is no other course left for Ireland to take, but to guard against the influence and the power of the British parliament. It has been observed, that Ireland cannot exist without the support of this country; and a noble friend of the right hon. gentleman has held out a threat of withdrawing from Ireland that protection to which she is indebted for her safety, and without which she neither could defend herself against a foreign enemy, nor survive intestine warfare. Thus the people of Ireland are plainly told what is to be the consequence of their refusing to surrender their independent legislature. The House then is called upon to put the two countries in a situation the most perilous and frightful.

It is curious to observe the arguments which the right hon. gentleman and his friends have used in support of the measure. One would be tempted to think, that the right hon. gentleman had formed a coalition with the united Irishmen, with whom he seems to be perfectly agreed in five out of six of their leading principles. The united Irishmen wished to destroy the present constitution of Ireland; this is also the object of the right hon. gentleman. The united Irishmen declared the parliament of Ireland to be the cause of all the miseries with which that country had been afflicted: the right hon. gentleman has brought forward the same accusation against them. The united Irishmen charged the legislature of their country with being the dupe of the English party: the right hon. gentleman also ascribes all the distractions and all the misfortunes of Ireland, to the influence of a British faction over the parliament of Ireland. It is not, indeed, to the faction which he heads there, that he ascribes this influence, but he has asserted, that it was exerted by one, at the head of which the duke of Portland stood, and of which his hon. friend near him (Mr. Windham) was a member. He has told us, that that faction made a tool of the Irish parliament to answer its own purposes; and the united Irishmen have repeatedly made the same assertion: thus they are agreed as to the evil. They are also agreed as to the remedy; for they both prescribe a revolution—*delenda est Carthago* is the maxim of both; the Irish parliament, they agree, must be destroyed, and this is made the grand cure. The united Irishmen and the right hon. gentleman have proposed to apply their remedy, however, in somewhat a different manner. He would incorporate a few of the representatives of the people of Ireland in the British parliament. With respect to the means by which these measures were to be carried into effect, they are also agreed. The united Irishmen said, they knew better what was good for Ireland than all the rest of the people of Ireland did: the right hon. gentleman has said the same thing of himself. Like him, too, the united Irishmen did not scruple to make use of corruption to gain their object: they resorted to force and intimidation; the right hon. gentleman has done the same. The only difference between the two was, that the united Irishmen, conceiving their parliament to be the mere tools of England, were for deposing it, and setting up a republican form of government with foreign assistance; while the right hon. gentleman is for merging the Irish representation into that of England: his plan, as well as theirs, proposes the extinguishing of the parliament of Ireland, and the means he uses to insure success, are the same as those to which they resorted.

The question, then, which we have now to consider is, whether a British parliament will second the right hon. gentleman in his project, and sanction this similarity between him and the leaders of that rebellion, which the House lately so much deplored. It was once observed by an hon. friend of mine, in speaking of an hon. member of this House, that he had a temper so pugnacious and so obstinate, that if he saw two persons fighting in the streets he would never think of separating them, but would rather insist that they should go on and fight it out. This was said by an amateur of the art of pugilism, at a time when that honourable science was held in greater repute than it is now. But with whatever truth it may have been said, I should hope that no secretary at war would wish to see a legislative battle of the kind with which we are now threatened, but that he would rather wish to separate the combatants when he should know that they were the Irish parliament and the British chancellor of the exchequer. Let the battle, however, be fought when it may, it will not be uninteresting. Each party is well seconded. The chancellor of the exchequer has two allies—corruption and intimidation. The people of Ireland have two allies also—honour and resolution;—honour to resist the

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corruption, and resolution to laugh at the intimidation of the right hon. gentleman. We have been told, that the existence of Ireland depends upon this project being carried. This I deny. The proposition has not, and never can be made out; but it is a melancholy consideration that the right hon. gentleman should obstinately persist in his scheme, after the solemn manner in which it has been rejected by the parliament of Ireland, and after he knows in what detestation it has been held by the great majority of the people of that country. If the right hon. gentleman should continue in the same temper, the people of Ireland may naturally be expected to resort to every method of precaution, calculated to defeat his scheme, and to oppose the influence which he would exercise over them by the weight and example of the British parliament.

Much has been said upon the corruption and misgovernment of the Irish parliament; and it is not a little extraordinary that these imputations should come from those mouths which not long since poured forth eulogiums on that very parliament which they now so grossly libel. I am far from pretending that the Irish parliament is free from blame. I do not mean to say that it has never neglected its duty, nor over-stretched its power. I ascribe to it no infallibility: but when the right hon. gentleman has so lately pronounced that parliament which he now censures the saviour of Ireland—when he has, through the medium of the viceroy, congratulated them on the suppression of an insurrection, and on the defeat of an invading enemy, I may be allowed to state it as an argument against the right hon. gentleman, that after giving the parliament of Ireland credit for doing so much good to the country, he has no right, and indeed he cannot with consistency, charge them with corruption and misrule, and pretend that this new charge of his shows the necessity of the measure he wishes the House to agree to. That the parliament of Ireland has sometimes fallen into errors; that many of the evils which exist in Ireland, might have been remedied by them—these are propositions which I am not inclined to deny; but I shall always contend, that a union is not the cure for the evils complained of, and that a British legislature can never correct the political defects, or remove the distresses of Ireland, so effectually as its own legislature. To maintain this position, the right hon. gentleman must show that the state of Ireland would have this day been better than it now is, if a union had taken place at a former period: he must prove to us, that the adoption of this measure would have prevented insurrection, silenced discontents, united discordant interests, and conciliated the exasperated feelings and irritable passions of the country. Unless he do this, his case is not made out, and upon this ground I am willing to rest the merits of the discussion. Doubtless there is much to be done in the way of reform and improvement in Ireland; but to do this it surely is not necessary to pull down the credit and authority of parliament. I should not have expected this conduct from the right hon. gentleman, whom I have so often heard declaim against that spirit of innovation which is prone to overthrow instead of propping and repairing ancient institutions. I should not have expected that he would be the first to lay violent hands upon the Irish parliament. Bad as he has represented that parliament, and however blamable it may have been, it has certainly recovered much of its credit and character by the noble stand it has made in defence of the liberties and independence of the country.

The argument that the right hon. gentleman and his friend used when they asserted that a union was indispensable to the continuation of the connexion between the two countries, I cannot admit. I deny that we have no alternative but separation or union. The real alternative is, that the Irish government should no longer continue to be a corrupt English job. Is it meant to be asserted that there is some innate depravity in the Irish character which renders them unfit to have a parliament of their own? No, the cause of the corruption which has been complained of is obvious. The government of Ireland has been made a job of for the advantage of English ministers. This is the corruption, this is the evil that has pervaded it from first to last, but before Ireland be required to surrender her independence, let at least a trial be made of what can be done by an honest Irish parliament; by a parliament uninfluenced by a British minister, by a parliament having the interest and the happiness of Ireland for its object, and looking to Irish prosperity and Irish gratitude for its reward. Let it not be a parliament looking only to St. James's, but one that shall

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have the advantage of the country constantly in view. Let this experiment at least be tried before the annihilation of the Irish parliament be proposed. I am certain that nothing can be done in this way which would not tend to strengthen the bonds that unite the two countries; and I deny that we are driven to the alternative stated by the right hon. gentleman. In the position in which the two countries are now imprudently placed, if there were a disposition to separation, that disposition must be greatly increased. The right hon. gentleman holds out that Ireland is helpless and dependent: he threatens the country with a measure it detests, and drives the people to take every precaution against the corruption and the intimidation with which he menaces them. The right hon. gentleman has displayed much eloquence in describing the political defects of the government of Ireland, but he will not succeed in persuading the people that all the advantages he promises them from a union cannot be as fully enjoyed under a parliament in their own country. It seems to be a favourite maxim with him and his friends, that it is not possible there can be a good government in Ireland. The absurdity of this assertion is too obvious to require refutation. On a former occasion I observed that the character and habits of the people of Ireland were such as would render the removal of their legislature fatal to their industry and ruinous to the nation. Indeed it is my confirmed opinion, that if ever there was a country in which a tangible, visible, and resident government was necessary, that country is Ireland. The right hon. gentleman has told us, that Ireland will obtain great commercial advantages in consequence of a union. Why not give Ireland those advantages without a union? He has told us that the situation of the Catholics and the Dissenters will be improved; but he has not said why these ameliorations should not take place without a union. If, indeed, Ireland is to be regarded as a conquered country, then there is an end to all arguments of this kind. If gentlemen proceed upon this principle, they should come boldly forward and state it.

It is generally admitted that the distress and poverty of the lower orders in Ireland is, in a great measure, owing to the number of absentees. This evil, it was observed, would be increased by a union. A noble lord has, however, asserted, that a union would not increase the number of absentees, but that, on the contrary, it would make gentlemen reside more on their estates than they now do. He contends that the importance of a seat in the imperial legislature will make the Irish landlords anxious to cultivate the affections of their tenants. This, instead of conciliating, seems rather calculated to insult the feelings of the people. They were to be told when the absentee came to canvass, that he was not now soliciting a seat in the puny and miserable House of Commons of their own country, but in the imperial legislature: this is, however, a very singular argument, since it goes to prove, that men become kinder landlords in proportion as their legislative duty places them at a greater distance from their tenants; that they will be better neighbours, in consequence of only visiting their estates once in twelve months, and that they will all at once become humane, generous, and benevolent, from the worst of motives. It is surely no great compliment to the gentlemen of Ireland, to state that they are only likely to do good from motives such as these. The noble lord must certainly have a very high idea of the impression that will be made upon the Irish members when they enter this imperial House. He, perhaps, pictures to himself, the hundred Irish knights struck dumb with astonishment and awe: he doubtles imagines that they will all possess the kind of diffidence which used to distinguish former Speakers of this House, who were always forced into the chair, until you, Sir, set another example. The noble lord possibly expects that it will be necessary to order the serjeant at arms to force the Irish members into the imperial House, and that they will be confounded, that they will actually crawl in upon all fours, and all this the noble lord tells us will make them kinder landlords and better neighbours! This sort of argument is not very well calculated to conciliate the good will of the Irish. But it is needless to dwell longer on this. The Irish are not so dull and stupid a race as not to see its tendency. I shall therefore proceed to make the motion of which I gave notice. I believe there are few that will not agree to the first part of the resolution. It contains a truism, which if the right hon. gentleman had not already declared he would oppose, I should not have expected would have

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been objected to by any one. Mr. Sheridan then moved, "That no measures can have a tendency to improve and perpetuate the ties of amity and connexion now existing between Great Britain and Ireland, which have not for their basis the manifest, fair, and free consent of the two countries; and that, whoever shall endeavour to obtain, the appearance of such consent and approbation in either kingdom, by employing the influence of government, for the purposes of corruption and intimidation, is an enemy to his majesty and to the constitution of his country."

Mr. *Pitt* said:—The hon. gentleman's motion divides itself into two parts. The first states that no measure of union should be pursued without the fair, and free, consent of the two countries. This, Sir, as the hon. gentleman has himself stated, is a truism. It was never attacked, it cannot be controverted, and must be assented to as soon as stated. But the argument, which the hon. gentleman has adduced as decisive in favour of his motion, is a decisive argument against it. If a thing be true, there requires no declaration to give it effect, and all such attempts are useless and nugatory; but more particularly ought it to be an argument against it, when actual truth includes practical falsehood: upon this point it is not necessary that I should say more. The second part of the motion states, that whoever should, by corruption or intimidation, attempt to carry the question, is an enemy to his country. This unquestionably goes the length of insinuating, that such conduct has been pursued; it undoubtedly alludes to the case of a high officer in the sister kingdom, who has quitted his situation on account of his disagreement with his colleagues in an important fundamental measure of government. Now, Sir, if several gentlemen are connected together with the honourable intention of acting for the service of their country, it is necessary, in order to preserve a unity of action, that they should agree in their system; and it is an error to suppose that the resignation, or even the dismissal, of any one, is a symptom of corruption and intimidation. The hon. gentleman well knows the necessity of a harmony of conduct among the several members of administration. The hon. gentleman will not deny it in any place but this House. If upon any occasion there has chanced to exist a difference of opinion among the members of the government, it has always been seized upon with avidity, and quoted as a mark of the insincerity of administration. I have heard it stated from gentlemen on the other side, that the not permitting a lord lieutenant to dismiss all the servants of the crown at his will, was fettering his hands in an unprecedented manner, and depriving him of his legal and constitutional authority. It is impossible, therefore, for the hon. gentleman to assert that doctrine, unless he means to apply it to the particular instances to which I have alluded; and if he does not mean to apply it to those instances, it is then open to the objections which applied against the first part of his motion. The instance which hon. gentlemen have particularly fixed their attention upon, is not one of an extraordinary nature; it is the necessary consequence of an established system; it grows out of the very nature of all governments, where there exist the necessity of all the members acting together. Upon the grounds which I have stated I shall move the order of the day.

Mr. *Grey* said, he could not see why the right hon. gentleman should cavil so long upon the word truism, upon which he asserted that his hon. friend has grounded his resolutions. It was a truism, if he pleased so to call it, but it was one which contained a proposition that was truly stated, and which he felt to be a sufficient ground for his assenting to the first part of the resolutions, if not to the second. He could see nothing but danger in the discussion of the question, particularly as it would affect the public mind in Ireland. The House, in his opinion, should have resisted it in the first stage; but, above all they should not now leave it in the power of ministers to bring forward the measure whenever they pleased, and thus keep Ireland in continual dread, that intimidation or corruption may continue to attempt the introduction of a measure which her parliament has decided against. Such must be the opinion created in the public mind of Ireland, not merely by the moving of such a measure, but the avowed determination of the right hon. gentleman to persevere in it. The resolution therefore went to relieve Ireland from these apprehensions, and to let her know that this House entertained no idea of countenancing a measure that did not meet with their fair and free consent and approba-

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tion. Intimidation and corruption were at all times a crime; and if he had grounds to suppose that the right hon. gentleman had been guilty of it in the present business (he confessed, however, he had none), he most certainly would impeach him. But, though he had no proof that could authorize him to institute such a charge, he could not help saying, that his conduct rendered him liable to that suspicion. The right hon. gentleman has spoken of the difference of opinion which may arise on certain occasions between the members of the executive government, on fundamental points of policy, which, if permitted to be persisted in, must arrest the progress of public business: but though that may undoubtedly be true as to the general concurrence of the members of administration on the general policy of public measures, yet it was a principle which by no means went to justify the making the vote of a member of parliament on a particular question, a sufficient reason for his dismissal from office, while he agreed, perhaps, with his colleagues on all other points, that surely was not within the rule which the right hon. gentleman seemed to prescribe to himself. The case, adduced so triumphantly by the right hon. gentleman, was very different from that now in dispute. The lord lieutenant whom he had alluded to, was to carry a system of government wholly different from that which was pursued before his entrance into office: that lord lieutenant was instructed to carry certain measures, to which he knew most of the members of the then existing administration in Ireland, were decidedly hostile: if, therefore, he made such arrangements as were necessary for the accomplishment of that general plan, he was justified in so doing, and his conduct on such an occasion would be widely different from that now pursued by the right hon. gentleman, who, according to his own principle, might be justified in removing a person high in office, who differed from his colleagues on some fundamental point, as in the case of the chancellor of the exchequer in Ireland. For should it fairly authorize him to remove the prime serjeant, who administered an office that should stand aloof from the influence of government, as all law offices should do, merely because he would not vote, as the right hon. gentleman wished on the question of the union? This, surely, was making parliament the instrument of corruption. But the right hon. gentleman had said, that the dismissals complained of arose solely from the fair and honourable intentions of government, who, for the security of the public good could not continue to act with those who differed from them on great and essential points of policy. Was this the uniform opinion which ruled the public conduct of the right hon. gentleman? If so, he would beg leave to ask, if there was not a time when a question as important as the union with Ireland, and as essential in the then opinion of that right hon. gentleman, to the interests and well-being of good government—he meant parliamentary reform—which that right hon. gentleman had brought forward, and which he pledged himself to exert all his influence both as a minister and a man ultimately to carry into effect? As a man, indeed, he had done much for that measure; for he once supported it with an eloquence which no man could equal; but as a minister, it is well known how he had since acted with respect to the same measure? Where, then, were his fair, sincere, and honourable intentions? Had he since manifested them in the removal of those who opposed that measure; or another measure, the slave trade, to the abolition of which he had so warmly professed himself a determined friend? By no means, they still continued in office, and might be reckoned among his most confidential friends—in vain did he exert all his eloquence to persuade them—they resolutely determined to differ from him on what he then asserted to be a fundamental point of policy. Where, then, was the proof of that sincerity which now prompted him to dismiss those who would not agree with him on the present measure? Did not this suffice to show that he could not justify his former conduct by his present assertions, and that all must now agree with him on all occasions or forfeit their places and his favour, while the right hon. gentleman attempted to style the discussion of the present great question, a free, fair, and unbiassed discussion?

The question being put, "that the order of the day be now read," the House divided:

	Tellers.	
YEAS	Mr. Douglas Mr. Canning	141
NOES	Mr. Sheridan Mr. St. John	25

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The order of the day being accordingly read, for the House to resolve itself into a committee of the whole House, to consider farther of his majesty's message of the 22nd of January, and the question being put, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the chair,"

Mr. *St. John* rose. He observed, that it had been admitted, pretty generally, that the prosperity of Ireland had increased, since the declaration of the independence of the Irish parliament; and therefore it was fair for him to presume that something more ought to be adduced in support of the measure of a union, than merely to allege the necessity of it, or to say that it would conduce to the farther prosperity of that country. The right hon. gentleman who came forward with his resolutions upon this subject, stated on a former occasion, that neither this nor the other country could be placed in such a condition, as the present crisis of affairs demanded, without the union of both. That made it necessary to consider how far legislative union would bring to the common service of the empire a greater degree of force than it now possesses. Many comparisons were made between the probable effect of this, and the certain effect of the union with Scotland; it was stated that that union had produced mutual strength. This was not a conclusive reason; for it did not appear, that Scotland would not have improved, if the union had not taken place. Suppose a legislative union between this country and Ireland had taken place, and the prosperity of Ireland had been the same as it is at this moment—it would then be just as fair to say, that such prosperity was owing to the union, as now to say, that the union produced all the prosperity now felt in Scotland, or to say, that the union now proposed will have that effect. But he was not called upon to discuss this point: the view which he wished to take of the question was simply this: Whether, in the present situation of affairs, the House of Commons in Ireland having declared its sense against considering the measure at all, any good could result from the agitation of it at this moment in the parliament of England? Whether supposing that the union was in itself the greatest of all possible advantages to Ireland, it could produce any good to agitate the question now? In his opinion, as the Irish House of Commons had expressed an opinion unfavourable to the measure, it was unwise to enter at this time upon the discussion in this country. He was of opinion it would irritate the House of Commons of Ireland; for it was not likely to have any other effect upon that House than that of irritating them, to find, that, although they had expressly decided against it, yet the parliament of this country were proceeding without any regard to their determination, or as if no such determination had taken place. This might induce them to adopt some measure to manifest their resentment at such conduct. Was it not, therefore, a matter to be wished, that a measure, which instead of uniting, tended to disunite the two countries, should be avoided? Was it not better to let the whole question rest for the present calmly, and the parties be left to cool upon the subject, and to bring it forward if it should appear to be necessary, at a season adapted for that purpose? The right hon. gentleman had taken up the ground of objections to the measure, and had proceeded to answer those objections. The first was, to the competency of the Irish parliament; the second was, the supposed attack which this measure made upon the honour of that parliament; the third was, to the effect it was alleged to be likely to produce on that country with regard to absentees. Of the first it was needless to say any thing now in answer to the observations of the right hon. gentleman: he had maintained the competency of the Irish House of Commons, and they had decided against it. The second was purely a question of feeling, and, as such, more likely to irritate the people of Ireland than any other question at the present moment; and as the House of Commons there had decided against it, the discussion of it here was peculiarly improper, for, in their present state of mind, it was likely to drive them to take some step that might be hostile to reconciliation. This was, in his opinion, a point to be much attended to in the present critical condition of the empire. We were told there was no statesman in Europe nor any minister among our allies, who would not regard this union as a proof of the consolidation of the strength of the British empire; and we were told that the allies of the French republic would also feel the force of this union. Granting those arguments to be sound in the view of a union, what would they lead to, if the measure was attempted, but failed

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in the progress of it? When it appeared that one branch of the parliament of one of the two countries had negatived even the consideration of it, what conclusion was likely to be drawn, as well by our allies as by the allies of the French republic? Assuredly that the attempt had weakened, instead of strengthening the British empire. But it was said that the disturbed state of Ireland required this measure, as a remedy to its evils. He admitted, that there were evils existing in Ireland, but he was not yet convinced that some other remedy might not be devised for those evils. He had heard that there were religious and other feuds in Ireland; but before this measure was carried, it was necessary to show that there was no other remedy for the evil. It had been stated, that the Roman Catholics in Ireland, possibly if the union took place, might have some liberties which they do not at present enjoy. It was therefore cautiously thrown out, and accompanied by hints, that it was to be a thing that might at some distance of time happen: it was stated rather as a thing in prospect, than a thing now to be adopted. This was only exasperating the Irish Catholics; for by telling them that a favour may or may not be granted to them in the event of union,' they would regard it rather as a lure to induce them to assent to the union, than as any serious intention to relieve them, and therefore they were likely the more to oppose the measure on account of that sort of half promise of relief. Much had been said with regard to the danger of innovation. When parliamentary reform had been talked of, its opponents had always discovered that the time was improper for it. If any time was ever improper for such a measure, the present time was highly improper for the present measure. Besides if this plan of altering the representation of the people was to take place in Ireland, upon what principle was it to be contended that a reform was not applicable to the parliament of England? It was impossible to say that the one must be reformed, and the other must not be reformed, with any degree of consistency. The argument, in point of season, was equally applicable to both, whatever might be the comparative merits of the representation of the two countries. If it was said that the people of Ireland were not duly represented. He was ready to assent to that assertion. He was ready to say, that instead of the people being duly represented there, only the corrupt wishes of a party were represented there? but the argument upon the question of time was now stronger than it ever was. He therefore called on all those who had always found the time improper for innovation, now to oppose this measure; for if any time was improper, this was certainly so; and some gentlemen had held the danger of innovation to be so great, that it were better for all the corruptions of a state to be allowed to remain, than that they should be made subject to any plan of general reform, and on that account had always regarded those who called for reform as little better than abettors of our enemies. All such persons ought most strenuously to oppose the measure now before them; for, indeed, it was a dangerous measure, if any innovation could be deemed so, and might possibly produce, instead of preventing, rebellion in that country. He was not in the habit of bestowing praise upon the House of Commons of Ireland, but he would say what he thought of them: he was of opinion that that House of Commons, by the steps they had lately taken upon this measure, had shown themselves much more worthy of being called the representatives of the people of Ireland, than he thought they were. They had spoken their sentiments boldly, and had plainly shown that they were not to be dictated to by government. That, in point of principle, was in itself good, be the determination upon the measure wise or otherwise. Having said this, he would frankly own that the question itself was doubtful to him at present. His opinion upon the union was not yet very distinctly formed: it was not necessary for the present purpose that it should be distinctly formed; it was sufficient for this case, that the agitation of the point was at this time highly dangerous. If Ireland had agreed to the discussion of the subject, he should then have been called upon to deliver his opinion upon the measure; but here they had negatived even the idea of discussion; and that being the case, he foresaw danger in persisting any farther now. Upon these grounds he should oppose the motion.

Mr. *Grey* said:—We are now called upon, Sir, under circumstances the most extraordinary, to agitate a question the most momentous that ever came before any parliament; we are called upon to discuss a bargain which we have not the power to conclude, and on which, one of

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the parties, whose consent is absolutely necessary to give it effect, has declared distinctly they will not listen to the very preliminary of the proposal; but to which they, upon the instant object, as containing a principle which is inconsistent with their most sacred rights, and at variance with the very essence of that system of government under which they have already thriven. Under such circumstances, I was in hopes the right hon. gentleman would have spared a debate, which in its best effect can be but useless, but which may become most calamitous by inflaming discontents and increasing jealousies, which have already produced but too much evil. It is under such circumstances that I come forward to join my voice to those who have deprecated the right hon. gentleman's ill-advised determination to press forward a measure which the very first principle of all policy, namely, the tranquillity of a great part of the empire, should have induced him at all events to have suspended. We have all a sincere desire to carry into effect one part of the message from his majesty—we are all friendly to a system that tends to consolidate the two kingdoms. What I most heartily wish for is, a union between the two countries: by a union I mean something more than a mere word—a union, not of parliaments, but of hearts, affections, and interests—a union of vigour, of ardour, of zeal for the general welfare of the British empire. It is this species of union, and this only, that can tend to increase the real strength of the empire, and give it security against any danger. But if any measure with the name only of union be proposed, and the tendency of which would be to disunite us, to create disaffection, distrust, and jealousy, it can only tend to weaken the whole of the British empire. Of this nature do I take the present measure to be. Discontent, distrust, jealousy, suspicion, are the visible fruits of it in Ireland already: if you persist in it, resentment will follow; and although you should be able, which I doubt, to obtain a seeming consent of the parliament of Ireland to the measure, yet the people of that country would wait for an opportunity of recovering their rights, which they will say were taken from them by force. Let us apply this principle to the case now before us. The right hon. gentleman has asserted that this measure is absolutely necessary for the safety of Ireland. This is an assertion which, I think, he has failed to prove. Great evils undoubtedly exist in Ireland. But, do they owe their origin to the legislature of Ireland; or are they likely to be removed by this proposed union? These are the two questions on which the right hon. gentleman has fairly put the matter, and on which depend the whole merits of the measure before us, and in that light I mean to argue it.

To begin, then, I would ask, are the evils of which the right hon. gentleman complains as existing in Ireland, and which call for remedy, arising from the circumstance of Ireland possessing a separate legislature? That Ireland has an independent legislature is true. That with that legislature great calamities have happened in Ireland is also true; but the right hon. gentleman is much too good a reasoner to conclude, that, because these two things are co-existent, therefore the one of them must be considered as the cause, and the other the effect; they may possibly have reference to, or dependance on one another. The right hon gentleman has stated that we, on this side of the House, have seldom expressed much friendship for the parliament of Ireland, and that it is a little odd that we should discover so much propriety in their determination now. I shall endeavour to discharge myself from any imputation upon that particular. When I have said in this House that the parliament of Ireland was governed by corruption—when I have said, and others have said with me, that there was so much corruption in the parliament of Ireland, that peerages were granted to men who possessed boroughs, the members for which voted for government—when we alleged these things, and offered to prove them at your bar, and when we found that, by the advice of the right hon. gentleman, this House refused to enter upon that inquiry we protested against his advice, although the House adopted it. But I think it is a little singular that he who accuses others of the trick of changing their sentiments for the purposes of the moment, should, on the sudden, himself turn round and change the whole of his tone upon this same subject. That he whose influence is supposed to have directed the majority of that legislature, should now suddenly turn round, and not only speak with contempt of them, but be angry with any person who can see any virtue in any one of their efforts, is certainly matter of asto-

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nishment even to those who are most accustomed to sudden changes of political opinions. But how the right hon. gentleman can prove the corruption of the Irish parliament as a general proposition, and their pure virtue, in every measure in which they have supported him, is a point which I must leave him to explain. Until he proves that the parliament of Ireland, which have virtuously supported all his measures for years together, are, in their very nature so corrupt as to be incapable of amendment, he has made out no case. I say, however, that although the conduct of the parliament is censurable in many respects, we must look to other causes than that of the independence of their legislature for the evils which the Irish people endure. They have been owing to the conduct of government, and for which the right hon. gentleman is responsible, unless he can show that all the measures taken in Ireland were forced upon him by the sturdy disposition of the Irish parliament, which he had no means of preventing, and which nothing can prevent but a union. Nothing short of proof to this effect can justify the measure which is now before us.

But is it true that any of the evils of which the people of Ireland complain, have originated from the obstinacy of their parliament? Have they not rather originated from the obstinacy of government; from the obstinacy and crooked system of the right hon. gentleman himself, and of too many of his predecessors? Look at the History of Ireland, and you will find, that if it had not been for British councils, and British intrigue, none, or, at least, but few of the evils which are now so much felt there, would have taken place—evils of which government is the parent, and yet which are now made the reason for taking away all the semblance of liberty among the Irish people. There are feuds and religious animosities, and heats and dissensions, now in Ireland. Who has excited them? Who has endeavoured to set up one party in that country against another, and which has brought it into such a state of distraction? Government has caused all these evils, and government is now making use of these very evils as a pretext for taking away the liberties of the people of Ireland. They have raised hopes, they have disappointed those hopes—they have excited alarms—they have created discontents—they have fostered animosities—all these things produce mischief, and that mischief is then given as the reason for taking away the liberties of the people. Is this the fault of the people themselves? are they unfit for trust or confidence? Did they abuse it when it was reposed in them? Look at their conduct in 1782. Look at the behaviour of the volunteers that met at Dungannon. [Here he read the resolution passed at the meeting at Dungannon.] These were the genuine feelings of men who were declared independent, and always will be, when they are left to themselves. But this good and happy temper has been spoiled—and other feelings have been artfully excited in that country. But to come to the year 1794. Lord Fitzwilliam went to Ireland, not instructed indeed—that is a phrase to which the right hon. gentleman would object—but certainly authorized to grant emancipation to the Catholics. How was that received? By a disunion among the Protestants? No! with cheerfulness. But there was then in Ireland a small party, considerable neither in talents nor consequence, to whom the right hon. gentleman listened: the system was altered; the gleam of hope held out to the Catholics was destroyed. Lord Fitzwilliam, who was authorized to hold it out, and who took delight in a task so grateful to his feelings, was suddenly recalled. From that moment every thing became gloomy. Disappointment begot discontent—discontent, aversion—aversion, hatred—all these afterwards broke out in those acts of violence which occasioned what the right hon. gentleman was pleased to call a lamentable but necessary severity. I was sorry to hear him justify the acts of severity which have been used in that country; for nothing can render *torture* necessary in the present state of civilization in Europe. Will the right hon. gentleman, will any man, justify the practice of torture for the purpose of gaining political information? Nor has any thing which the right hon. gentleman has said about connexion with the enemy justified a practice so abhorrent to humanity.

Having said this, I am now led to take a short view of the final adjustment of 1782; and here the right hon. gentleman plays off the trick of a debater upon us, instead of arguing the matter fairly. He says there could be no final settlement or adjustment at this time, because it was even then expressed that something was left to be done. But he knows well

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enough, and he ought to have the candour to acknowledge, that there may be a final adjustment, and yet something be left to be done; that is, there may be a final adjustment of one thing, and that another may be left to be settled, and which indeed was the case. The final adjustment referred to the political independence of the Irish legislature; the point to be settled was one that related to trade. Before that adjustment, I think no country was less indebted to another, than Ireland was to Great Britain. The repeal of the sixth of George 1st was the first measure of liberality from this country towards Ireland. After this a plan was adopted, and a bill brought in by my right hon. friend (Mr. Fox), and that was considered as all that was necessary upon the subject; and Mr. Grattan, after the declaration of the independence of the Irish parliament, observed in the Irish House of Commons, that this was all they wanted from Great Britain upon the constitutional point—that having done away the obnoxious act of parliament which stood in the way of their independence, they would not receive any thing more upon the constitutional rights of the Irish people from the parliament of England, for that they were themselves competent to the management of their own rights. After this, a decision took place in one of our courts of law which excited the jealousy of the people of Ireland, and Mr. Grenville came over by command of the lord lieutenant to make a complaint, and to state that to preserve harmony between the two countries, the claims set up in consequence of that decision of the court of law should be abandoned: it was abandoned accordingly; and for the purpose of clearing up all doubts upon it, Mr. Townshend, now lord Sydney, a particular friend of the right hon. gentleman, moved for leave to bring in a bill for removing all doubts which have arisen, or which may arise, concerning decisions, &c. and for quieting all disputes between the two countries. This was when the right hon. gentleman was chancellor of the exchequer. Then we come to what the right hon. gentleman calls a more authentic record of the debates of parliament than are usually given to the public under that title; and here it appears that the gentleman who in Ireland is at the head of the opposition to the union (Mr. Foster,) is introduced by the right hon. gentleman; a gentleman whom we are said, on this side of the House, to be disposed to treat with more respect than formerly—more respect! an invidious expression, by which the right hon. gentleman would insinuate that he is entitled to treat him with less respect. I confess I have not forgotten the share which that gentleman had in supporting the measures of the minister of this country in Ireland, nor have I changed my opinion of their destructive tendency; yet when I see a man, in direct opposition to his own personal interest, do that which appears to be right; when I see him oppose the measures of the right hon. gentleman with whom he has acted so long, and that not upon any doubt that the power of the right hon. gentleman is declining, but when it is as high as ever, and when I reflect, that from his knowledge of the temper of the right hon. gentleman, he must be aware of the effect of differing from him: when I see all this, I own I am induced to treat a man who thus shows an independent spirit, with "more respect" than I did formerly; and I think his conduct entitles him to the esteem and gratitude of his country—The right hon. gentleman has quoted some passages from the speech of that gentleman upon the debates on the Irish proposition. [Here Mr. Grey read the extract made by Mr. Pitt from Mr. Foster's speech]. This the right hon. gentleman quotes to prove there was at that time no such thing in contemplation as a final adjustment. Now, having read this part, I will refer to another from the same authority, to show that the adjustment was entire with regard to the constitutional point, and that all that remained to be adjusted between the two countries related to points of commerce. [Here he read part of the speech of Mr. Foster, in which that gentleman said, upon the Irish propositions, he could not remain silent when he heard any thing said that was unworthy of the independence of the Irish parliament, and that he should be unworthy of the name of an Irishman, if, for all the commerce in the world, he could assent to part with an atom of their constitution. He said that, "If liberty was the price of commerce, take back your commerce."]—But the right hon. gentleman may say that the liberties of Ireland will be as safe under the joint English and Irish parliament, as under the Irish parliament only; to which I answer, that Mr. Foster is of another opinion, for he says "he will

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stand or fall by the independence of the Irish constitution." I state all these things as the opinion of Mr. Foster, whose opinion the right hon. gentleman is so fond of quoting. But what is the opinion of Mr. Foster to me? He may change his opinion; and if I was to argue upon the change of opinion, the history of the right hon. gentleman himself would furnish debates for this House for the remainder of our lives. Let us turn to other persons: Mr. Foster, the chancellor of the exchequer, and the prime serjeant, have all lost their places for changing their opinions, or rather for retaining them when the right hon. gentleman differed from them. These places will be filled up, I dare say, by men of abilities and integrity, but I must observe that the present chancellor of the exchequer of Ireland was a great enemy to the Irish propositions. Here I take my information from the same authentic account which the right hon. gentleman has made evidence upon the subject.—[Here he read part of the speech of Mr. Corry on the Irish propositions, which that gentleman violently opposed, and insisted on the independence of the Irish parliament.]—I have given you the opinion of the chancellor of the exchequer of Ireland; I will now quote the opinion of the chancellor of the exchequer of England.—[Here he read part of the speech of Mr. Pitt on the 4th resolution of the Irish propositions, ending with an expression that he had rather abandon the proposition than excite any alarm about the revival of any claim of superiority of this country over the parliament of Ireland.]—All this I state merely to show that the arrangements between this country and Ireland were final with regard to all constitutional points.

The next point to which I am led is the objection which the right hon. gentleman stated to two independent parliaments. To show the inconvenience of it he quotes the case of the regency? What was the case of the regency? The parliament of Ireland vested in the heir apparent the full power of a regent without any restriction. The parliament of this country voted the same person, but with certain limitations and restrictions. But were the situation of the two countries alike? By no means. In this country a vast deal of power and influence attaches to the sovereignty independent of that which is properly to be called government: in Ireland there is none. When, therefore, they voted a regent, they had nothing but the power of government to give. The case was otherwise in this country. But the right hon. gentleman says that the principle is the whole thing to be considered; that they might as well have differed on the person as the power of the regent: to which I answer, that this is an extreme case; and that for all the usual and common purposes of government, there is not the least probability of any material difference arising between the two legislatures upon any practical measure; and so deeply was this idea impressed upon the parliament of Ireland, that we find Mr. Grattan advising the House of Commons to assent to some measures upon the war, on account of the danger which might result to the empire if the two parliaments should differ upon that important measure. [Here Mr. Grey took notice of the conduct of Mr. Pitt upon the subject of parliamentary reform, and observed that, although he had of late years opposed every thing that had any tendency to that effect, and branded every species of innovation with every epithet of reproach, he himself was at the same time the greatest innovator in this country.] Having said thus much, I have only to repeat, that the evils under which Ireland labours have not their root in the parliament of Ireland: that the remedy which the right hon. gentleman proposes will not meet the evil, nor be any remedy for it; that the agitation of the question cannot by possibility be of any service to the empire. All the utility of the publication of the resolutions and the speech of the right hon. gentleman is in its progress already, and cannot be aided by any vote of this House; for the measure then will be of no more authority than it is now, without the concurrence of the parliament of Ireland. The dangers of producing distraction in Ireland by this discussion are so great, that there can be no excuse for bringing this matter forward now. The wit of man cannot devise any good which it can produce, and the mischief may be incalculable. I did not hear the first speech of the right hon. gentleman upon this measure. I have been told it was as eloquent as any that ever fell from the lips of man, but what has been the effect of it in Ireland, where a report of it is circulated with great eagerness? It has tended to inflame the parliament there instead of reconciling

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them. They have agreed to a call of the House for the purpose of being all on the watch against the farther progress of the measure. I say, then, you will only increase the mischief if you proceed. Mr. Grey concluded with some general observations on the situation of affairs on the continent, in the course of which, he observed, that although the right hon. gentleman was not an enemy to any proposition for negotiation for peace, yet he was ready to confess, in the present situation of Europe, there was no hope of it. He was, however, for renewing all endeavours to negociate, whenever there was a prospect of obtaining it on honourable terms, but of which he saw no prospect while the French followed their present principles of aggrandizement. All that we could do was to unite all our affections and force together; not a union in words but a union of hearts; but the proposed union would, instead of producing strength, be the cause of weakness to the empire.

Mr. Secretary *Dundas* spoke as follows:—Mr. Speaker; notwithstanding the arguments so strenuously advanced on the other side of the House, I have no hesitation in declaring, that I rise with a considerable degree of satisfaction to refute the objections urged against the union with Ireland. Having followed the last hon. gentleman with the greatest attention, I flatter myself I shall be able to convince the House, that the reasons urged against the measure are totally groundless. The hon. gentleman has dwelt with much minuteness on the discussions of the year 1782, and on the commercial and political situation in which Ireland was then placed, and has since continued, in consequence of those discussions; but I beg leave to observe, that every deduction from those circumstances, and every grant made to Ireland at that period, have nothing to do with the question now before the House. The present proposition contains in it no suggestion derogatory to the acknowledged independence of the Irish parliament. It is a proposition for the incorporation of the two legislatures into one, without infringing on the liberty or independence of either. In addressing itself to the judgment and decision of the Irish parliament, this country explicitly acknowledges its independence; and to put an end to all cavil on that part of the argument, I am ready to admit, that by the transactions of 1782, the Irish parliament is placed on the same footing of independence, in relation to Great Britain, as Scotland was with regard to England before the union of the two kingdoms; and certainly I have never heard that the proposal made in 1707 for the union of England and Scotland has, at any period, been treated by the most captious opponents of the measure, as an attack on the independence of the parliament of Scotland. With regard to the measure itself so far from operating injuriously on Ireland, I can prove before I sit down, by a reference to the affairs of Scotland, at and after the union, that a similar measure would be attended with similar benefits to Ireland, by improving and increasing the political and commercial advantages of the latter country in the same proportion as those of the former have been improved and increased: and that the latter country would experience an equal increase of commercial and political advantages.

I had entertained an opinion, that the question would have been argued in a different stage of the business, and that there would not arise any debate on leaving the Chair. Had the motion for the committee been allowed to pass, Sir, both sides of the House would have had better opportunities of understanding each other by mutual explanation. That mode, however, meeting with opposition, I am reduced to the necessity of debating the measure on the particular point of your leaving the Chair. The discussion of the grand question, in this stage, is so far an inconvenience to me, as it leaves me less leisure to arrange and methodise the various statements I have collected on the subject. I am, however, ready to meet the opponents of the measure in any way they please, convinced that I am armed with such authorities, and such arguments, as will overturn every objection that can be offered. Since the union was first in contemplation, I have endeavoured to make myself as conversant with the subject as possible, by every research of history, and by a careful examination of the documents on which were grounded the articles of the union with Scotland. For this research I claim no particular praise, it being my duty, as well as that of every other member of parliament, to acquire as accurate a knowledge as possible of the subject under discussion.

In vindication of myself and friends, I have no hesitation in saying, that the af-

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fairs of Ireland demand at this period particular circumspection. I will assume, as a proposition, which I believe no man will have the boldness to deny, that there does exist at this time in Ireland a spirit of clamour and dissention, of treachery and treason, which menaces the overthrow of the present government. Conspiracies are so widely extended, their influence is so deeply infused into the minds of the people of Ireland, and the connexion between the two countries is thereby so much endangered, that without the active and immediate interference of the government, the result in the opinion of the most intelligent men, might have been a total separation of Ireland from this kingdom. Viewing Ireland in this perilous situation, it was the duty of his majesty's servants to extricate her from the intrigues of the common enemy, by preserving and improving the connexion which has so long and so happily subsisted between that country and Great Britain.

Now the question is, whether or not the political diseases alluded to were not likely to be removed by incorporating the two parliaments into one? In the observations which naturally arise from the subject I beg leave to assure the House, that I mean nothing disrespectful to the parliament or people of Ireland, when I affirm, that the evil machinations of the enemies of both countries have been too successful in most instances, and that the check or control of the English government is absolutely necessary for the salvation of Ireland. In my animadversions, I am not about to throw out any reflections injurious to the gentlemen who constitute the legislature of the sister kingdom, and I hope I shall not be accused of illiberal motives when I give it as my opinion, that a very great part of the people have been corrupted by the new doctrines, so dangerous to the existence of all regular governments, consequently so dangerous to that of the empire. Every good man, who had seen or heard of the influence of those destructive doctrines on the continent, would wish well on the present occasion to the active exertions of the government of Great Britain, endeavouring to preserve the liberty, the independence, and the happiness of Ireland. The picture which I have drawn of Ireland is of a gloomy and lamentable aspect; but in proportion as it is so, it becomes the duty of every well-wisher to both countries to devise some remedy by which he may destroy the hopes of the enemy, and give new life and vigour to the sister kingdom.

If any political maxim can be held more generally true than another, it is, that in order to regulate well the affairs of any nation, it is necessary that there should subsist a mutual confidence between the governors and the governed. But it is a melancholy truth, that there does not exist in the great body of the people of Ireland, that confidence in the parliament of Ireland which is essential to its utility. I need not go far to search for the reasons of this essential defect. It grew out of the frame and constitution of the parliament of Ireland. If the whole power of the country were vested in one-fourth of the people, and that fourth was separated from the other three-fourths by religious distinctions, heightened and envenomed by ancient and hereditary animosities, it was impossible that there could exist a mutual confidence between them. This, however, was certainly the situation of the parliament and people of Ireland. If there were such dissentions and animosities Ireland, the interference of a British parliament was admirably calculated to restore peace and confidence, by granting to the people of Ireland a free participation of all the privileges enjoyed by their fellow subjects of Great Britain.

It is impossible to imagine a remedy more appropriate to the radical cause of the disease which poisons the peace and happiness of Ireland, than the measure of an incorporating union of the legislatures of the two kingdoms. The Protestants would, of course, lay aside their jealousies and distrust, being certain that against any attempt to endanger the protestant establishment in Ireland, the whole strength of the united parliament must be exerted; and, on the other hand, every Catholic who is a friend to the connexion with Great Britain, but is desirous to obtain every indulgence, and be admitted into a participation of every privilege and benefit consistent with that connexion, would be confident that their cause would be candidly and impartially considered by a united parliament, the great body of which would be relieved from those apprehensions, jealousies, and inveterate animosities, interwoven into the frame and constitution of the separate parliament of Ireland.

When gentlemen talk so much of the parliament of Ireland, and insist that a consent to the present measure would to-

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tally destroy the liberty and independence of the Irish parliament, I am certain they bewilder themselves in a misunderstanding of the terms which they use. How could it have that effect? Would not there be, by the incorporated parliaments, the three estates of King, Lords, and Commons? And if there be a sufficiency of the aristocracy, and a sufficiency of the democracy of the different countries, how would either the independence of the parliament, or the liberty of the people of Ireland, suffer? I have no hesitation, Sir, in maintaining, that an incorporated parliament, partly English, partly Scotch, and partly Irish, is much better calculated for the management of the affairs of the British empire, than separate parliaments in England, Scotland, and Ireland. The powers of a parliament so constituted, would be more extensive and effectual than when acting separately in different places. It ought also to be recollected, that with all the boasted independence of the parliament of Ireland, it could not give vigour or effect to its acts, till approved by the third estate, whose residence was in England. The controlling power was properly vested in the sovereign of this country, who was also the sovereign of Scotland and Ireland. Then the parliament of Ireland is not entirely independent. And if it be true, that the parliament of Ireland, as now constituted, be dependent on the third estate of this country, it is evident that the parliament of Ireland is not that independent state which this argument seems always to take for granted.

The more this part of the argument is probed, the more fallacious the reasoning of its authors will appear. One of the most valuable privileges which the British parliament enjoys, is, the right it claims to watch over and control the conduct of the executive government, even in the exercise of those powers which are justly considered as the clearest and most undoubted prerogatives of the Crown. There is not one of those prerogatives in the exercise of which the servants of the king are not responsible, and to the control of which, in that shape, the power of parliament does not extend; and that power is bounded only by its own wisdom and discretion. The parliament of Ireland, in its separate state, is debarred from this important privilege, which it would obtain by an incorporation with the parliament of Great Britain. This observation is the more striking, when it is considered that this power of the British parliament extends, in the manner I have stated, to the control of the third estate of the Irish parliament, even in its legislative capacity, and that exclusively of the other branches of the Irish legislature. It is impossible candidly and dispassionately to examine those considerations, and not feel how extensively the character and importance of the Irish parliament would be exalted by the union of the two legislatures.

In support of these propositions, if they are disputed, I refer to the authority of Mr. Grattan, the champion of Irish independence, who says, "the parliament of Ireland cannot act independently; for in all questions of peace or war, it must implicitly follow the parliament of Great Britain." If the parliament of Ireland were as independent as its advocates now insist, why should it be obliged to adopt the measures of the parliament of Great Britain, on all occasions of peace or war? The incorporated parliament of Ireland would have all the privileges of the incorporated parliament of Scotland. To corroborate these facts, Sir, I, as one of the forty-five Scotch members, can, in the face of the five hundred and thirteen English members, freely discuss and watch the interests of Scotland. The parliament, thus constituted by the union, had not deprived Scotland of any of the privileges enjoyed previously to its incorporation with England. The union had increased the privilege of the Scottish members; for, instead of confining their deliberations to the affairs of Scotland, they were empowered to take part in discussions respecting the affairs, not only of England, but of the whole British empire; and so far as regarded the third estate, had even an interference in the affairs of Ireland.

If the parliament of Scotland, Sir, thus incorporated, has all the rights now described, the parliament of Ireland, incorporated on similar principles, would have the same privileges. The deliberations of the parliament of Ireland, thus constituted, would also operate successfully in all questions respecting the affairs, not only of Ireland, Scotland, and England, but of the whole British dominions. It would enlarge its powers, and give greater vigour and effect to its operations. But now the parliament of Ireland has no right to discuss questions in which Great Britain only is interested. It is a misstatement of terms to talk of destroying

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the parliament of Ireland, for the union would place the Irish members in the same situation as the members of the parliament of Great Britain.—I condemn, Sir, the operations of personal vanity, which, in this instance at least, run riot against the principles of common sense. I wish gentlemen would direct their pride and honour to acts of laudable ambition—I wish they would evince greater patriotism, by a due attention to the interests of both countries. If considerations of personal vanity and self-independence are to be allowed to operate on this subject, let gentlemen recollect, that if their genius be ever so acute, their talents ever so transcendent, their eloquence ever so splendid, all these wonderful powers are confined to one little island. All their genius is limited to their own internal regulations, and reduced to their own small territory. Independence and liberty are fine sounding words; but can it be seriously maintained, that for the preservation of these, it is necessary to have a separate and local legislature? The soil and spot where the parliament sat do not constitute its value, but its adaptation to preserve the general interests of the community at large. This is the only true and valuable object of independence. I address myself therefore to the true pride of Ireland, which ought not to be biassed by false principles of honour. A mind thus actuated is governed by a childish, not a manly ambition. Let, however, the Irish parliament accept of a participation of all the rights of the parliament of Great Britain, and they would find, that their eloquence would not be confined to England, or to any other country, but their voices would extend to every corner of the world. They would be heard, not only in Europe, but in Asia, Africa, and America. The parliament of Ireland would then become members of the British parliament, which had enabled this proud country to exalt its head amidst the wreck of surrounding nations; had given it energy and vigour to resist the pernicious doctrines of the French republic; and held us up as a monument of admiration and envy to the remotest corners of the world. They would then be the advocates, not only of Ireland and Great Britain, but advocates for the rights and liberties of the human race.

A parliament thus constituted would be worthy of true ambition. It would be a more respectable body than what had been described by a gentleman, who, in talking of the limitations of the parliament of Ireland, compared it to a great vestry or parish meeting. I wish, Sir, to give efficacy to the parliament of Ireland—to bring it from that narrow and confined situation, to act in a more enlarged sphere—to explore new sources of true greatness—to participate and enjoy all the benefits and advantages of the parliament of Great Britain. Whether, therefore, I consider the state of the Irish parliament in its collective or individual capacity, I am equally decided it will gain extensively by the success of the present measure.

An objection has been taken that we ought not to have proceeded on the business in this country till the propositions had been made to us by the parliament and people of Ireland. I confess I do not understand the objection. In the progress of this important business, it was intended to follow, step by step, the manner of recommending and adopting the union between Scotland and England. When the queen of England sent a message to the parliament of England on the subject of the union, her majesty sent also a similar message to the parliament of Scotland. But we have many records, by which we may direct our proceedings. The measure of a union with Scotland had been so often in contemplation, that the general plan required little amendment. It had been proposed in the days of James 1st, in those of Charles 1st, in those of the usurper Cromwell, afterwards by William, and lastly by Anne. It never was offered in the one parliament, without at the same time recommending it to the consideration of the other.

In considering the question of an incorporating union of the two legislatures of Great Britain and Ireland, it is impossible, in every view of the subject, not to turn one's eyes to the state of Scotland before and since the union, and to contemplate the advantages which have resulted from it to that part of the united kingdom. This part of the subject would lead into such a length of detail, it is impossible to pursue it fully, without wearing out the attention and patience of the House. I must, therefore, content myself with referring to a few general heads, which will strike more forcibly by putting them in a Comparative View of what they were at the union, and what they are now:—

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COMPARATIVE VIEW.

Shipping in 1692	..... 8,618 tons, value £.25,854
Ditto ... in 1792	... 162,274 tons, value 1,298,192
Leith ... in 1692	..... 1,702 tons
Ditto ... in 1792	.....18,468 tons
Scotch linen 1700	1,000,000 yards for sale
Ditto ... in 1796	23,102,404
Customs at the Union	£34,000
Ditto ... in 1798	... 284,577
Excise at the Union	.. 33,500
Ditto ... in 1798	... 851,775
Population 1755	...1,265,000
Ditto in ... 1795	...1,534,000
Glasgow population from 1701 to 1710.....	... 14,790
Ditto in ... 1798	... 77,042

From this statement the happy effects of the union are evident. I wish particularly to impress upon the minds of those who oppose the measure, the wonderful increase of the Scots linen trade. This I am the more eager to notice, as the linen is the present staple manufacture of Ireland; and a celebrated character in that country has thought himself warranted to descend so far as to endeavour to create an alarm on that subject. At the time of the union, that trade in Scotland amounted to about one million yards; but by the fostering care of the united parliaments, and from a benign consolidation of the interests of both kingdoms, it had increased to the quantity of twenty-three millions, manufactured in the year 1796.

These improvements and increase of trade were not confined to any particular part of Scotland. They were experienced in every corner of it; and there is not now an inhabitant of any spot in all Scotland who has not cause to rejoice at the event.

Many melancholy pictures, in the shape of prophecies, were presented to the public view on that memorable occasion. Among other false prophecies, permit me to make a few remarks on that celebrated speech of lord Belhaven: "I think I see," exclaimed his lordship, "a national church voluntarily descending upon an equal level with the Jews, Papists," &c. Now to prove his lordship a false prophet in this, I not only think I see, but I actually do see, that very national church, founded upon a firm foundation, at the distance of ninety years from the passing of the act of Union; and that very national church so firmly secured in all her privileges, that it is very likely she will continue to possess them, unimpaired, for ever! In truth, her simplicity and her poverty will remain to her an impregnable security against the plunder and rapine of all ruffian hands! "I think I see," continues his lordship, "the noble and honourable peerage of Scotland, now divested of their followers and vassalages, and put even on an equal footing with their own very vassals." If the union has had a tendency to break asunder the bands of feudal vassalage, which prevailed to too great an excess in that country, wise and virtuous men will not be disposed to consider this as one of the evil consequences to be lamented in the formation of a legislative union of the two kingdoms. As to the peerage of Scotland, considered as a body in the state, it may be true they suffered some transitory mortifications in consequence of the union; but I believe there is no candid or good man in that whole respectable body who would wish to change their present situation for all the pomp and poverty they enjoyed previous to the union. "I think I see," adds his lordship, "the royal state of boroughs walking their desolate streets," &c. On the contrary, I see that the boroughs, instead of being desolate, are most of them ten times improved in population, in industry, and in wealth! To prove this, it is only necessary to mention the names of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Perth, Montrose, Dundee; and, in short, every other town of any name or consequence in that part of the united kingdom. "I think I see our learned judges," continues lord Belhaven, "laying aside their practices and decisions, studying the common law of England," &c. Now I see no such violation or alteration of the municipal law of Scotland, which is as purely administered now as it was before the union took place. But although the Scotch judges do not study the common law of England, by way of introducing it into their courts, I certainly must do my lord Belhaven the justice to acknowledge, that at all times the northern part of the island has produced some of the brightest luminaries of the law of England, who never would have emblazoned Westminster-hall with their transcendant talents, had not the union taken place between England and Scotland. "I think I see," adds his lordship, "the valiant and gallant soldiery of Scotland, all their old corps broke up, the common soldiers left to beg, and the youngest English corps kept standing." Now I do see, that the

* See Vol. 6, Appendix, No. I, p. cxlii.

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natives of Scotland, both in the army and the navy, from the common soldier, and the man before the mast, to the general in the field, and the admiral on the ocean, instead of being worse treated than the English, are put upon the most equitable footing with the soldiers and the sailors of this part of the united kingdom, according to their respective merits! I do see nothing but the most liberal rewards and provisions made for the Scottish as well as the English hero; both of whom have consolidated their strength, by a politic and glorious union, for the general benefit of every part of the British empire! "I think I see," continues this noble false prophet, "the honest industrious tradesman drinking water in the place of ale; eating his saltless pottage, and petitioning in vain for encouragement to his manufactories!"—The increase of excise, in Scotland, since the time of the union, is certainly no proof that this part of the prophecy has been fulfilled; or that water has become the beverage of the people of Scotland. But I need not enlarge on this topic. The reverse of the prophecy is notoriously the truth, in every respect. "I think I see the laborious ploughman," adds this visionary, "with his corn spoiling upon his hands, for want of sale, cursing the day of his birth," &c.—Now I do see on the contrary, the mere ploughman enjoying treble wages, and treble comforts; while his master, the farmer, instead of his corn spoiling upon his hands, for want of sale, reaps such profits from its immediate sale, as enables him to live almost upon an equal footing, in point of every social enjoyment, with even the hereditary landed gentleman, the possessor of the soil itself! "I think I see," continues his lordship, "the pretty daughters of our landed gentlemen petitioning for want of husbands, and their sons for want of employment."—Now I do see, and I believe every one in this House sees, that the pretty daughters of the Scotch nobility and gentry, so far from petitioning for husbands, bear, at the present moment, a very high premium in the hymeneal market of the English aristocracy!

I need not enlarge on a topic which is proved to every man's observation, by the examples daily passing before them. In truth, nothing has tended more to accelerate the happy connexion which now subsists between the two parts of the island, than the intercourse of friendship, habits, and affection, arising from the union of the beauty, wealth, and talents, produced by the intermarriage of the inhabitants of the opposite sides of the Tweed. And as to their sons petitioning for want of employment, let me do justice to this liberal nation by declaring, that we need only look into every profession in life, from the Scotch gardener, baker, and hair dresser; up to the Scotch merchant, the Scotch physician, the Scotch general, the Scotch admiral, and the Scotch lawyer, to prove, that, since the union, merit has been equally rewarded throughout the whole island, whether its possessor was rocked in his cradle on the south, or on the north side of the Tweed! The noble lord concludes this prophetic reverie, with an allusion to the death of Julius Cæsar, which he compares to the murder of "Mother Caledonia," by her own sons in the Scotish parliament. The comparison is so wild and inapt in all its parts, that it would be a waste of time to pursue it. If the Scotch parliament had been such a tyrant as the comparison would suppose, there was real patriotism in her instant annihilation. But in justice to the memory of my ancestors, I disclaim any such charge, as imputable to the ancient Scotish legislature. Whoever will take the trouble of perusing the acts and regulations of the Scotch parliament, will find a fund of much wisdom and good policy to admire. But the union of the two kingdoms is ill understood, and ill defended, by those who conceive that it proceeded either from want of wisdom, or want of virtue in the Scotch parliament; it proceeded from a principle of rendering the exertions of its members more extensively useful, by enlarging its functions; and making them, as they now are, sharers in the deliberations of that legislature, which is the only truly exalted assembly, for the rational and practical freedom, for the security and the felicity of man, on the whole surface of the habitable globe!

Considering these historical facts, the people of Scotland sacrificed much more than what is now required from Ireland; and I believe the hon. gentleman (Mr. Grey) will admit, that the people of his northern neighbourhood had also experienced the happy effects of the union. It was certainly within his recollection, as faithfully recorded in history, that the two nations had thought it necessary to suffer a vast waste of territory, near the river which separated England from Scotland,

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to serve as a boundary; and that all this desart, anciently a land of neutrality, was immediately cultivated and adorned, and, besides its excellent agricultural qualities, had produced men of talents, capable of taking a distinguished part in the debates of the British parliament, and capable also of defending the liberties and privileges of Northumberland!—By the union with Scotland, and the cultivation of this waste land, England got also the co-operation of a race of gallant men, who aided her in the most perilous situations, and were frequently the foremost to fight her battles!

Against all the prophecies of lord Belhaven, and the other opposers of the union, I will take the liberty of bringing under the recollection of the House a passage in a letter from queen Anne to the Scotish parliament, recommending to them to take the articles which have been agreed upon at London under their consideration: it was in these words:——"The union has been long desired by both nations, and we shall esteem it as the greatest glory of our reign to have it now perfected, being fully persuaded that it must prove the greatest happiness of our people. An entire and perfect union will be the solid foundation of lasting peace; it will secure your religion, liberty, and property, remove the animosities among yourselves, and the jealousies and differences betwixt our two kingdoms: it must increase your strength, riches, and trade, and by this union, the whole island being joined in affection, and free from all apprehensions of different interests, will be enabled to resist all its enemies, support its interests every where, and maintain the liberties of Europe."* From this remarkable passage it was evident that her majesty was a true prophetess, for not one syllable of her predictions has failed.

It has been asked, what right have we to impute all those advantages to the union of the two kingdoms, and why it is not to be supposed that Scotland, like other nations, would have advanced in prosperity from the various causes which have contributed to the modern wealth of other states? There are a multitude of answers that might be given to this question, founded on the local situation of Scotland, her internal policy, and her relation to other nations, which must for ever have debarred that kingdom, in a separate state, from participating in that prosperity which has marked the progress of other states in Europe. But in place of consuming the time of the House by reasoning, to which it may justly be imputed that it is influenced by events that have since occurred, I think I shall give them more satisfaction by using the words of a contemporary statesman, who shows himself a master of the subject, who was one of the commissioners for treating with England for a union, and who, upon the first article being brought under the consideration of the Scotch parliament, gave his sentiments in the following words:—"My lord, this article is the foundation of the whole treaty, and the approving or rejecting of it must determine union, or no union, betwixt both kingdoms. How far the approving this article conduces to our happiness appears evidently, by considering the three different ways proposed for retrieving the languishing condition of this nation; which are, that we continue under the same sovereign with England, with limitations on his prerogative, as king of Scotland; that the two kingdoms be incorporated into one, or that they be entirely separated. That the union of crowns, with limitations on the successor, is not sufficient to rectify the bad state of this nation, appears from these positions, founded on reason and experience. Two kingdoms, subject to one sovereign, having different interests, the nearer these are one to another, the greater jealousy and emulation will be betwixt them. Every monarch, having two or more kingdoms, will be obliged to prefer the council and interest of the stronger to that of the weaker, and the greater disparity of power and riches there is betwixt these kingdoms, the greater influence the more powerful nation will have on the sovereign. Notwithstanding these positions, I shall suppose the parliament of Scotland is vested with the power of making peace and war, of rewarding and punishing persons of all ranks, of levying troops, and of the negative itself. I could show the inconveniences that must attend such a state of government, in disposal of places, and managing public affairs. I could likewise show the improbability of attaining such conditions, or in keeping them if attained. But laying aside such considerations, my humble opinion is, that we cannot reap any benefit from these conditions of government, without the assistance of Eng-

* See Vol. 6. Appendix p. cxxix.

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land, and the people thereof will never be convinced, to promote the interest of Scotland, till both kingdoms are incorporated into one; so that, I conceive, such a state of limitations to be no better for Scotland than if it were entirely separated from England; in which state, there is little appearance of procuring any remedy to our present circumstances; which appears from these uncontroverted positions. The people and government of Scotland must be richer or poorer, as they have plenty or scarcity of money, the common measure of trade. No money or things of value can be purchased in the course of commerce, but where there is a force to protect it. This nation is behind all other nations of Europe, for many years, with respect to the effects of an extended trade. This nation being poor, and without force to protect its commerce, cannot reap great advantages by it, till it partake of the trade and protection of some powerful neighbour nation, that can communicate both these. To illustrate this last position, I shall give a short view of the state of commerce we must needs be in with respect to our neighbour nations, supposing an entire separation from England. The ordinary mean whereby we can flourish in wealth, is that balance which arises from the exchange of our natural or artificial product with other places: but we have no valuable branch of export which does not interfere with the like commodity, in some more powerful neighbour nation, whose interest it is to suppress or discourage our commodity, for raising the value of its own; so that there is no demonstrable security for the vent and encouragement of any branch of our export. Can it be expected that Holland will suffer us to improve our fishery, which is to them a nursery for seamen, a livelihood to many families, and an immense treasure to the public? If we traffic with England, our linen cloth, cattle, and coals, will be discouraged, at least after the same manner that we discourage export from thence. If we traffic with Muscovy, Sweden, Denmark, Poland, Germany, France, Spain, Portugal, and Italy, the sale of our commodities will be of small value in those places, seeing the Dutch or English, by their increase of trade, are capable to serve them with most of the like goods, cheaper and better than we. Let us look to any other part of the world, for vent to our product, and we will find other nations have prevented us. If we attempt the East India trade, that is already enhanced by the Dutch, English, French, Spaniards, or Portuguese, from whom we must expect opposition; they themselves opposing one another daily, and we of no force to debate the same with the most inconsiderable of them. The trade of Africa is for the most part of small value, and every province of America is claimed as property by some powerful European nation. If it be said, that Scotland may make alliance with one of its neighbour nations for protection; that alliance must be with Holland, England, or France, other countries being so remote, or poor, that their friendships can be of little use to us. With Holland we can have no advantageous alliance, because its chief branch of trade is the same with ours: with the English we can expect no profitable friendship, for they being our near neighbours will be jealous of our increase in power; and from France few advantages can be reaped till the old offensive and defensive league be revived betwixt France and Scotland, which would give umbrage to the English, and occasion a war betwixt them and us. Allowing the Scots, in such a juncture, with the assistance of France, to conquer England, Scotland, by that conquest, could not hope to better its present state; for it is more than probable, the conqueror would make his residence in England, as formerly the northern people used to do in their southern expeditions. From these considerations, I conceive, that this nation, by an entire separation from England, cannot extend its trade, so as to raise its power in proportion to other trafficking nations in Europe: but that hereby we may be in danger of returning to that Gothic constitution of government, wherein our forefathers were, which was frequently attended with feuds, murders, depredations, and rebellions. My lord, I am sorry, that in place of things, we amuse ourselves with words: for my part, I comprehend no durable union betwixt Scotland and England but that expressed in this article by one kingdom; that is to say one people, one civil government, and one interest. It is true the words fœderal union are become very fashionable, and may be handsomely fitted to delude unthinking people; but if any member of this House would give himself the trouble to examine what conditions or articles are understood by these words, and reduce them into any kind of fœderal compact,

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whereby distinct nations have been united, I will presume to say, these will be found impracticable, or of very little use to us. But to put that matter in a clear light, these queries ought to be duly examined, whether a fœderal union be practicable betwixt two nations accustomed to a monarchical government? Whether there can be any sure guaranty projected, for the observance of the articles of a fœderal compact stipulated betwixt two nations, whereof the one is much superior to the other, in riches, numbers of people, and an extended commerce? Whether the advantages of fœderal union do balance its disadvantages? Whether the English will accept a fœderal union supposing it to be for the true interest of both nations? Whether any fœderal compact between Scotland and England is sufficient to secure the peace of this island, to fortify it against the intrigues and invasions of its foreign enemies? And whether England, in prudence, ought to communicate its trade and protection to this nation, till both kingdoms are incorporated into one?"

Thus spoke Mr. Seton, of Pitmadden,* at the time when he had no resources, from which to draw his conclusions, but those of his own enlightened understanding, and the view he could take of the existing state of the other nations of the world. But his reasoning was solid, and I would injure it by adding more to the particular points he has so ably treated of. I shall, however, add one fact, which, in my conception, proves, beyond a doubt, that the rapid progress of prosperity in Scotland arose from the union of the two kingdoms. Where did the prosperity of Scotland make its first appearance, and its most early progress? It was in the western parts of the kingdom, owing clearly to the circumstance of those ports being locally best situated to take the benefit of the colonial trade, then opened to the enterprise of Scotland.

A question has been triumphantly asked by an hon. gentleman—"Why not give all those advantages to Ireland without a union?" The best way I can answer this is, by another question—If Great Britain should communicate these indulgences or opportunities to Ireland, could she, under her present constitution or government, take the advantage of them? I am convinced she could not, and that in her present situation such concessions would not be productive of advantage. Without an incorporated union, they would be of no avail; for the strength and resources of both countries must be consolidated, in order to enable Ireland to reap the full advantage from such concessions. It is from the confidence in the strength of government, that a communication of capital and other advantages can alone arise. And this consideration recalls to my mind, a proceeding which took place before the union with Scotland, which put the interests of that kingdom and Ireland in a sort of issue. It happened early in the reign of Charles 2nd. From the period of the crowns of both kingdoms being united in the person of James 1st. Scotland enjoyed several important commercial advantages derived from England, until the reign of Charles 2nd, when they were done away by the provisions of the navigation act: the Scots remonstrated against what they called an injustice, and commissioners were appointed to take cognizance of the matter. In the course of these proceedings, the Scots, as already stated, loudly complained that they were treated with less indulgence than the Irish. This complaint was answered by the English commissioners as follows:—"And whereas your lop'ps (lordships) doe in severall places give hints at Ireland, and seeme to make it a ground why this and other privileges should be granted to Scotland, because granted to Ireland, the answere is most cleare and obvious, (viz.) that Ireland is not onely under one king with us as Scotland, but belongs to, and is an appendix of the crown of England, and laws made in the parliament of England doe bind them; and no law can be enacted by the parliament of Ireland, but what passeth the privy counsell of England, and orders of the counsell of England, and the great seale of England, doe take place in Ireland; yea, the treasurer and other great officers of state in England, have jurisdiction and superintendency in Ireland; by all which it is absolutely in our power, when we grant privileges to them, to compell and keepe them up to the restrictions of them; all which is quite otherwise in relation to Scotland." These were assigned as reasons to the Scotch commissioners, why Ireland, in its then existing connexion with England, was considered as entitled to a degree of indulgence superior to that allowed to their nation; matters are now totally reversed;

* See Vol. 6, Appendix p. cxxxviii.

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and in the present very much altered state of the relation between Great Britain and Ireland, a similar answer may be given to the question, "Why not give these advantages to Ireland without a union?"—In addition to this it might be observed, that the English government, consistent with the duty they owe to their British fellow subjects, could not make such concessions to Ireland under its present constitution and separate legislature; so that the very circumstance of Ireland enjoying what is called an Independent Legislature, is the means of depriving her of a participation in these commercial benefits. Concessions of such a nature, I contend, cannot be safely granted until the superintendance of an imperial parliament possesses the control over the resources of the empire at large, and the power of applying them to imperial purposes. Indeed, the answer of the English commissioners, as I have just recited, is one of the best that can be given to the repeated question I have already mentioned.

With respect, Sir, to the fate of the propositions in 1785, so much spoken of, the commercial benefits then tendered to Ireland were rejected, on the same mistaken grounds that the House of Commons set their face against the present measure—They thought that the fourth proposition encroached upon their independence, and in consequence refused great commercial advantages. This consideration, I think, brings the question between the two countries to a fair issue. Is Ireland to be considered in a better situation with her present separate legislature, and deprived of these manifold commercial advantages; or with her legislature incorporated with that of Great Britain, with the full enjoyment of all those commercial benefits, and the various other advantages in a view of power, consequence, and respectability, as must result to Ireland, when thoroughly united with Great Britain? This is the true question to be considered by the Irish: for my part, I have not a doubt upon the point—the latter situation would be decidedly to the advantage of Ireland.

Great stress, Sir, has also been laid, by an hon. gentleman, on the settlement in 1782, which has been called a Final Adjustment. I shall not cavil about words, but I contend that much of the argument founded upon that proceeding, as used by the hon. gentleman, was thrown away, as inapplicable to the present question. Indeed, I might call it, on his part, as fighting with a shadow. The question at issue, Sir, I must again repeat it, is between the benefits and advantages, take them all in all, derivable to Ireland from her present separate legislature, or those from an incorporated union; and I must again protest against the idea, that any thing in the present proceedings is any ways hostile or derogatory to the acknowledged independence of Ireland. The very mode of putting the present question to their parliament, implies its legislative independence.

Much, if not the chief stress of the arguments urged by those who oppose this measure, has been laid on the opposition which has been made to it in the parliament of Ireland. But when circumstances are attended to, I cannot refrain from stating, that this view of the subject is given in very erroneous colours. Two estates of the parliament of Ireland, the king and the lords, have pointedly expressed their desire, that the subject should be entertained and considered; and the contrary opinion has been carried only by a very narrow majority in the House of Commons. Under such circumstances, it is idle to talk of this as a solemn decision of parliament. But if it had been entitled to that appellation, it would not have altered my opinion as to the propriety of this House considering the question, and taking the most effectual means of bringing it again and again under the consideration of the Irish nation. Sound reason and good sense will ultimately prevail; and I cannot help auguring well to the ultimate success of the measure, as essential to the happiness of Ireland, when I contemplate the clamour and violence by which the consideration of it has been resisted. These are not the weapons by which truth and solid reasoning maintain their empire over the hearts and understandings of men. Cool consideration, and sober reasoning, are the arms by which the cause of truth is supported; and I have not a doubt that these weapons, properly used, will ultimately succeed against all the clamour and prejudice that can be adduced against them.

I believe there is no candid and rational man who is at present disposed to dispute, that a system of excise is the least expensive and most effectual mode by which a great revenue can be collected in any country. But it is in the memory of living men, and within the reading of us all,

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with what obloquy the first authors of that great system were loaded on its first introduction. But the solid understanding of mankind at last prevailed. In this, as in almost every other part of this subject, I must refer the recollection of the House to what passed in Scotland on occasion of the union of that kingdom with England. When gentlemen pretended to think lightly of the sacrifices of Scotland compared with those of Ireland, let them recollect, that Ireland had not, for many centuries, been free or independent of England, but that Scotland never was completely subdued, or under the control of England; that Scotland gave up, what Ireland cannot give up, an independent parliament of King, Lords, and Commons; and that Scotland gave up, what Ireland cannot give up, an independent and separate Crown! The Scots undoubtedly surrendered these honours at the time with reluctance, and evinced the greatest hostility to the union, until experience had made her acquainted with its blessings. I cannot, Sir, help noticing the vast unpopularity of the duke of Queensberry and other commissioners in favour of the union, while the zeal and activity of the duke of Hamilton and lord Belhaven were the theme of every tongue. The duke of Queensberry, the nobleman who took the most active part in carrying the measure into effect, and was her majesty's commissioner for the purpose, narrowly escaped, in several instances, with his life. The duke of Hamilton, the patriot of that day, the most violent opposer of the measure, was applauded to the skies for his conduct by the populace—they regularly chaired him from his apartments in Holyrood-house to the parliament house, just as the Dublin mob lately did the speaker of the Irish House of Commons, exclaiming, in their mad career—"God bless your grace!" But those who had been so much reviled, and had so nobly withstood the storms and tempests of the times, had the consolation to live and witness the popularity of that measure for which they were condemned. The Union soon became so popular, that the Pretender, having pledged himself to a repeal of the Act of Union, excited such a fermentation against him, that he was obliged to expunge this promise from his manifesto!—This change of sentiment happened in the year 1715, eight years after the Union; and it ought to afford a salutary lesson to those false patriots, who choose to rest their characters and fame on the short-lived clamours of the day; and it ought to afford a heart-felt consolation to those who have the magnanimity to disdain such mean and paltry arts, trusting that their real patriotism, founded on a consideration of the true interests of their country, will not fail ultimately to secure to them that solid and permanent fame which is alone worthy of possessing.

Another argument, Sir, I wish to submit to your consideration in favour of the Union. If it be true, as insisted upon by Mr. O'Connor, in his evidence, that the people of England, according to their present form of government, have no cause of complaint, when compared with the state and sufferings of the people of Ireland, then it consequently follows, that a union between the two nations, founded on principles of common freedom, and common interest, will at once remove every cause of grievance on the part of the people of Ireland. By the participation of the freedom of Britons, by the full enjoyment of all the privileges attached to a member of such an honourable community, the government of this country endeavours to destroy the hopes of the enemy, and to strengthen and consolidate the interests of the empire. If it be true, as generally acknowledged, that the poor of Ireland experience all the miseries concomitant to a state of want and wretchedness, then it follows, that their participation of the privileges of Britons, will rouse and animate to laudable exertions that useful description of our fellow subjects in the sister kingdom. That liberty which awakened the commercial enterprise of Scotland—that liberty which expanded its genius in the most honourable pursuits—that liberty which confirmed every sentiment which can dignify human nature, will, Sir, I am sure, have the same happy influence on the people of Ireland, connected with us by the dearest reciprocal obligations.

There are certain gentlemen, who had the hardihood to maintain, that the advocates for a union were enemies to the peace of Ireland; but sure I am, Sir, that no arguments can be more futile or absurd. The introduction of that freedom into the various classes of Ireland, which was the admiration, and seemed the panegyric of all Europe, was no indication of the hostility of the government of Great Britain: it would be a partnership, which would diffuse and extend its political and com-

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mercial advantages to the remotest corners of the globe—it would soon dissipate all idle and illiberal jealousies—it would allay the apprehensions of the real friends of both countries; and, by an equality of rights, infuse into the imperial spirit that noble emulation of mind which is the source of every excellence.

There are no sinister arts, as some malignantly insinuate, adopted for the attainment of the grand object of our discussion. There are no measures of compulsion, as the enemies of the measure affirm, in the contemplation of those in power. I wish, Sir, to convince, not to intimidate, the people of Ireland. The system of terror, so often enforced by the common enemy, thank God, is no part of the policy of the British government. Adopting expedients of lenity and persuasion, we address ourselves to the liberality and wisdom of the Irish nation. They know the sincerity of our friendship; they know also the bitter malignity of that foreign power, which, like the rattle-snake, first endeavours to charm and then destroy. But, Sir, I thought that the eyes of every British subject were at last opened to the treachery of the common enemy of mankind; and sorry am I to find, that the very enemy now so generally execrated, compliments the people of Ireland, by alleging, that there is a spirit of credulity in the Irish system, which will admit of the grossest deception from those who have sworn to overthrow any government founded in justice and humanity.

With regard to the final adjustment of the year 1782, it was a misapplication of terms to call it final. It was also to little purpose to recur to the opinion of Mr. Grattan, or the sentiments he expressed on the subject of that arrangement, and the debates that preceded it. Mr. Grattan, on that occasion, was known to have been only the mouth-piece of the volunteers. The whole of the business was evidently done in a hurry, and could only be considered as a temporary expedient to serve the purposes and exigencies of the moment, not as a matter to which stability or permanency was likely to be attached. However that might be, the parliament of Ireland had afterwards succeeded in obtaining every thing it desired; and he was so far from denying a particle of its independence, that he admitted it in its fullest extent, and even founded upon it no small part of his present arguments. Sir, had the adjustment in 1782 not taken place, the situation in which Ireland would then stand, might have afforded an argument against the present measure, because then the sister parliament could not, in strictness, be said to treat fairly; but its independence, at the present time, gave it the same competency to treat, that was possessed by the parliament of Great Britain.

If, however, upon reflexion, the Irish legislature should not be convinced of the utility and necessity of the projected Union, there was an end of the plan, and it must retain that degree of independence which it preferred to the numerous and important advantages which were held out to it. The division in Ireland, I admit, was hitherto so apparently hostile to the proposal, that it was nearly decided that it should not be even entertained or discussed. But gentlemen seemed to insinuate an apprehension, that it was to be intimidated and bullied into it. The administration of this country, in the most full and unqualified manner, disclaimed the idea of any such intentions. Whatever might be the general opinion, or the prejudice against it, now in the heat and violence of the moment, arising from national pride, and a variety of other motives, I make no doubt but, were the measure adopted, in less than eight years that country, like Scotland, would be fully reconciled and convinced of its utility.

Among other arguments against the Legislative Union, was an appeal to the national pride of Ireland. By those strenuous opponents of the measure, it was alleged, that the parliament and people of Ireland would be degraded. Here again I must refer, Sir, to those stubborn facts recorded in the page of history. By a happy combination of wisdom and humanity, the heptarchy was overturned, and an empire established on principles of sound policy. The prince who accomplished this grand object, certainly merits the highest encomium for the operations of justice and humanity. But I wish, Sir, to put it to the conscience and feelings of those conversant with history, if they think that the various interests were injured or degraded by the appellation or privileges of Englishmen? The people of the Seven United States or Nations were neither debased nor enslaved by the consolidation of their interests under one imperial management or direction. The Welchman, a brave and generous character, neither feels himself enslaved nor degraded

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by a consolidation of interest and freedom; and sure I am, Sir, that the Scotchman is actuated by too noble and generous principles to entertain for a moment such an opinion. From these facts, I hope, therefore, I may assume, as a natural conclusion, that as former parts of the empire found neither injury nor inconvenience in a union, that Ireland, as soon as prejudice and passion have subsided, will be equally harmonious to the happiness of the community. Such a state of union would appear invincible to the common enemy, who, in the career of his conquests, not only robs individuals of their property, but perverts and destroys the salutary institutions of the nation with which he pretends to fraternise. A national mind, united according to the principles now recommended, and a public force thus concentrated, would be capable of repelling the attacks of the most formidable enemy, however strongly impelled by the new doctrines, and however animated by the fertile genius of innovation.

I have already had occasion to advert, in one point of view, to the argument, that we should proceed no farther in the business after the House of Commons of Ireland had expressed its repugnance to it in so unequivocal a manner. I have only farther to say, that no decision of that House shall deter me, and the government of Great Britain, from telling and explaining to the people and parliament of Ireland, in as much detail as possible, what the proposals were which we were desirous to submit to their cool and dispassionate consideration. The Irish House of Commons have expressed what they think of a union: and it is our business to tell what we think of it also; for this reason it is, that I strenuously contend for going into the committee, that the whole people of both kingdoms may know what is the real basis on which we wish to treat. In this way only can we hope to baffle the various misrepresentations which are industriously propagated on this momentous business. I am the more desirous of it, because I contend the hon. gentlemen, who lay so much stress on the decision of the Commons of Ireland, carry the conclusion from that circumstance much farther than they are warranted. Even the Irish House of Commons have not said that they will never agitate the business again; it would, indeed, have been strange if they had done so. After the decision in the House of Commons, an attempt was made to carry a resolution for setting the question aside altogether by an hon. member (Mr. G. Ponsonby), whose motion the House thought proper to reject [It was here remarked across the table, that the motion was not rejected, but withdrawn]. This difference in the term, Sir, makes but very little alteration in the state of the fact; for it is very well known, that gentlemen, warmly embarked in strong party questions, are not very likely to withdraw them, unless the disposition of the House indicates that, if pressed, they will be rejected—such, no doubt, is the case in the instance alluded to. The hon. gentleman succeeded in his opposition to the address, but he failed in the motion with which he attempted to follow it.

All that is at present proposed, I again state, is, to give the people and parliament of Ireland time and opportunity to know and consider what the English parliament is willing to share with them, without attempting the smallest interference with their independence. Many objections, Sir, have been made to the time of bringing forward these propositions, as if it were the worst and most unseasonable that could possibly be selected. It is, however, agreed on all hands, that the situation of Ireland is truly alarming; that it is threatened with the greatest dangers; and that to avert them requires the fullest attention, and the utmost exertions of government. The only difference of opinion, therefore, is, with respect to the means by which the evils can be remedied. The administration of this country proposes a union, as the only sure and effectual means of affording it tranquillity at home, and security from external attacks. On the other side of the House, though a union was objected to, no other remedy has been offered. For my part, I conceive that there is a peculiar propriety in bringing forward the proposal at this very critical time, when the reports of both Houses of parliament in Ireland afford irrefragable demonstration, that there still exists amongst them a deep and formidable conspiracy to separate that kingdom from Great Britain, and totally destroy all friendly connexion between them. What then are the best means to meet and defeat the ends of this conspiracy, and disappoint the hopes of those by whom it is supported and fomented? I know of no mode of effectually doing so, but to ce-

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ment and consolidate, into one powerful and irresistible body, the strength of the whole empire, by a union of the two legislatures.

The similarity of the circumstances induces me again to recur to the opposition, so frequently and strenuously given, to the proposal of a union with Scotland. In various periods of our history attempts had been made to effectuate this favourite object, and as frequently frustrated. I shall shortly glance over the history of these attempts, beginning with that of Henry 8th, who offered his daughter Mary to James 5th of Scotland, holding out such inducements as the Scotish king was inclined to listen to; but the plan was defeated by the intrigues of the French and the popish faction. Edward 6th of England, in pursuance of his father's design, offered himself to Mary queen of Scotland; and though it was agreed to by the parliament of that country, the interference of the same faction rendered this treaty as fruitless as the former. The plan was again renewed in the reign of James 1st; and though articles of union were agreed to by commissioners of both countries assembled at Westminster, and ratified conditionally by the Scotch parliament, yet the jealousy of the high churchmen at that time caused them to be rejected in England. The plan was again brought forward in the reign of Charles the first, but ended in some unavailing conferences amongst the commissioners appointed to manage it. In the reign of William and Mary, the proposition for a union came from the Scotch convention, and, on a recommendation from the crown, the English House of Peers passed a bill for appointing commissioners for treating of a union of the two kingdoms, which bill was thrown out by the Commons. Thus the matter rested till the reign of queen Anne, at whose accession the project also failed, through the high church influence. But some reverses in the progress of the war, and some events which took place in Scotland, made England take the alarm, and be as anxious for the accomplishment of the union, as it was before forward in rejecting it. And here I wish it to be recollected, that when propositions to this effect failed in Scotland, it always happened through French influence and French intrigue. I remember a curious simile, which was urged as an argument against the union in the reign of James the first, to show that Scotland must be the sufferer. "If a rich field," said one of the commissioners, "lie next to a poor field, the latter must be the loser, as all the cattle would not fail to go into the richer pasture."—After the union was effected, many, no doubt, did from time to time come into the richer field, without, however, any injury being sustained by the fields from which they departed. It appeared then, that what first induced the people of England to become zealous for, and to urge a union with Scotland, was, to prevent the bad effects of party and French intrigue in that country.

What was then the situation of Scotland, now became, by various accidents, that of Ireland. France labours by every means to form a connexion in that country, and has in a great measure succeeded, as recent and unfortunate events testify: a union is proposed by Great Britain, as the surest way to put an end to this dangerous conspiracy by a consolidation of the whole powers of the empire. Those who most admire the transactions which took place in 1782, must admit, that no arrangement has yet taken place adequate to the cure of those diseases which threaten the destruction of Ireland; and those who were particularly concerned in the settlement of that degree of Irish independence alluded to, had uniformly avowed, that something farther was necessary, for the reciprocity of interests between the two countries so ardently wished for by the friends of both. If this deficiency of social compact between Great Britain and Ireland be acknowledged, as a recurrence to the proceedings of the times will verify, then it follows, that it was in the contemplation of those in power at that time to advance, as soon as convenient, to the completion of this grand principle. It is needless to state reasons, or conjectures for the delay of this final adjustment of amity: a variety of circumstances contributed to it; but I have no hesitation, Sir, in saying, that if such a plan as that intended had been discussed and confirmed by the parliaments of both countries, it is more than probable, that we should not now have to lament the acts of outrage and rebellion which have so recently convulsed and despoiled our sister-kingdom. It was this lamentable defect in the compact that excited the turbulent and obnoxious of Ireland—it was this lamentable defect that gave rise to the most dangerous passions

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and animosities—it, in fact, presented Ireland with more resentments to satiate, and less authority to control. While, then, we deplore the late abominable excesses, it is our duty to prevent the return of the sanguinary scenes, by a union of national interest, likely to reconcile and command the affections of the people.

I again, Sir, affirm, that in any thing which has fallen from me for the purpose of elucidating my arguments, I mean to cast no imputation on the parliament of Ireland. I maintain, that with respect to the Catholics, they are under the influence of prejudice; I know, at the same time, that it is a prejudice inseparable from the nature of their situation. Attempts were made to show, that the exclusions under which the Catholics of this country laboured, did not augur well for the Catholics of Ireland, when they should come under our legislation. Here again I am at issue with gentlemen who advance this hypothesis; and I do most sincerely maintain, that a union is likely to prove advantageous to the Catholics of both countries, as under the same legislature there is every probability that, after some time, the same measure of indulgence will be equally distributed to both. The Irish will stand a chance of being soon put upon the same footing with the English; and should it ever be found prudent wholly to improve the condition of the great majority of the Irish nation, the English Catholics might expect to be no longer under any restraints. But after all, I am of opinion, there is no comparison between the state of the Catholics in the two kingdoms; for if in England considerations of policy have hitherto imposed some restrictions on the Catholics, I am fully persuaded that they do not think their interests neglected, or that any sentiments of animosity, jealousy, or discord, are entertained against them. They may, and naturally do regret the exclusions to which they are subjected; but they never, for a moment, entertain a thought that there exists against them a hostile spirit, either in the legislative or executive government of this country. Nobody will venture to assert, that such is the feeling of the Catholics of Ireland. If any Irishman should unfortunately prefer French fraternity to British liberty, I would most earnestly impress upon his mind the horrors and devastations of the continent. Should he entertain a doubt of French rapine and murder, let him cast his eyes on Brabant, Holland, Switzerland, Italy and Egypt. In these miserable countries, he would find the unparalleled effects of the fertile genius of innovation and reform; he would there find innumerable examples of a violation of faith—he might there trace the agents of villany starting from one extreme of iniquity to another, scoffing and scorning justice and humanity, and, in the very face of heaven, defying divine vengeance. These are the bitter effects of French fraternity, and by which its miserable victims have been sunk in agonies of confusion and despair.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, that the right hon. gentleman had laid great stress on the necessity of the union, from the determination of the French to use their utmost exertions for the separation of the two countries; but he denied that the measure could in the least cause the French to relax in their designs, since they had never built their hopes on the separation of the two legislatures, but had all along rested them on the discontents of the people. The right hon. gentleman had insisted on the discontents in Ireland being founded on the excluded situation of the Catholics, and had held out by way of lure, that if Ireland came under the regulation of an incorporated and imperial parliament, their situation might be altered for the better. But, unfortunately for the right hon. gentleman's argument, another part of his speech proved how little they had to expect on that head; for he had shown, that the British parliament had acted far more illiberally towards the Catholics than the parliament of Ireland had ever done. To what cause was this to be attributed? To the influence of the English councils. Can it be attributed to the Irish parliament? He denied that it could; for it was evident, during the vice-royalty of lord Fitzwilliam, that the measure had been announced as intended to be carried into effect, and that the Irish parliament had never expressed any intention of opposing it; and he had no doubt, had not that noble personage been so abruptly recalled, the measure would have passed the Irish parliament. The right hon. gentleman had said, that all he wished for was time; and on some expression of countenance, or motion of body, which had been made by him, the right hon. gentleman had inferred that he (Mr. S.) thought that time was wanted for the purposes of corruption

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or intimidation. The right hon. gentleman was right in his conjecture; he did intend to signify by the shrug, that the time wished for by the right hon. gentleman, was meant to be used for the same ends and purposes as had been effected with the duke of Hamilton, when he was bought off from his opposition, without which the Scotch union would not have taken place. The right hon. gentleman had said, he wished to treat with Ireland on equal terms; but that was not possible, surrounded as she was with English troops, and depending on the British parliament for the continuance of her commercial advantages, she could not be in a situation to give a free assent. The right hon. gentleman had, however, discovered one peculiar privilege with which Ireland had been gifted by nature, and that was, she was surrounded by the sea. With this extraordinary advantage, however, he would advise the Irish parliament to give up the narrow and contracted sphere, in which they exercised their independence, in order to expand their views and enlarge their consequence by transplanting themselves into the imperial parliament, where they would derive so many advantages; among others the advantage of quitting a parliament where their chancellor of the exchequer was turned out for acting according to the dictates of his conscience, and of being transplanted to the imperial parliament, where they would behold a chancellor of the exchequer, whom no human power was likely to turn out of his situation. They might, perhaps, have the farther advantage of coming into an equal participation of the share in 400 millions of debt owing by this country [No, no]. After what he had many times heard of the competence and omnipotence of parliament, there was no safeguard against their breaking any compact they might enter into. The right hon. gentleman had very facetiously favoured the House with the recitals of several predictions of a lord Belhaven, in one of which he says, that mother Caledonia was stabbed by Julius Cæsar. Now lord Belhaven might have remembered that Julius Cæsar was stabbed by Brutus; and supposing that mother Caledonia was about to be stabbed by her sons, he might have confined her assassination to the stabbing of Julius Cæsar; but that he could predict that mother Caledonia would be stabbed by Julius Cæsar, was truly preposterous. From this inaccuracy, he thought he might fairly infer, that there was not much truth in the statements of the right hon. gentleman, relative to the manifesto of the pretender. The right hon. gentleman had said, that he had been obliged to strike out a part of it, which promised a repeal of the union: now he (Mr. S.) had been frequently credibly informed, that the fact was exactly the reverse. However, be this as it may, Ireland may receive all these benefits without a union; and to prove this, he had only to appeal to the rapid prosperity of the Irish commerce since she had gained her political independence. The right hon. gentleman had asserted, that the majority in the Irish parliament amounted only to five: but when that majority was contrasted with the minority of placemen, it would be found a weighty majority indeed. He then proceeded to notice what had fallen from Mr. Dundas relative to the motion made by Mr. Ponsonby, and denied that it was rejected. He contended that it was only withdrawn, and that upon the argument of, "Why press it at this moment, when it may be entirely useless? The English minister will never think of pressing this business, after he knows the decision of the Irish parliament; for the present, therefore, do not urge the question." On this the motion was withdrawn; but when the intention of the minister came to be known, it would be immediately resumed. He then came to the question of the competency of the Irish parliament, which was now agitating in every part of Ireland. If ministers deprecated the discussion, they should have chosen a less unfavourable time for bringing the project forward. He next adverted to the doctrine broached by the chancellor of the exchequer in his speech, "That it is a gross perversion of the principles of all political society, to suppose that there exists continually, in every government, a sovereignty *in abeyance* (as it were) on the part of the people." He was well aware, that attempts to ridicule the doctrine of that sort of sovereignty in abeyance were by no means new. Mr. Burke had, in more than one of his latter publications, attacked it with equal virulence. That principle, however, which those gentlemen treated with such contumely, which the right hon. gentleman styled a false and dangerous mockery, was in truth the foundation and security of all free governments, and most emphatically the

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vital principle of the British constitution. The right hon. gentleman had pronounced, with an emphasis of peculiar scorn, the words, "a sovereignty in abeyance." I thank him, said (Mr. S.) for introducing the term; it is precisely the definition I would give of this power on the part of the people—a right, not in operation, nor in assertion, until the great occasion calls it forth, but always existing in the remembrance and contemplation of the constitution—when the right hon. gentleman ridicules the appeal to this principle, on every frivolous pretence which may suit the purposes of party or faction, or when he tells us that, when the appeal is made in an extreme case, a perilous responsibility both in law and conscience attaches to those who make it, he tells us no more than what the warmest advocates for the principle in question are ready to accede to him. But it seems even if the right hon. gentleman were disposed to admit the existence of such a right in any case, he is still more decided that the people should never be told they possess such a right. This opinion Mr. S. combated as futile and evasive. Oppression might at all times, and in any government, provoke resistance, but it would be the resistance of despair, seeking for revenge and not redress. It was only where a people, instructed in their rights, met the assaults of ill-used power, with the consciousness that the justice of the cause was on their side, that resistance to tyranny could be well considered, well directed, or ultimately successful. The eternal gratitude of all freemen was therefore due to Sydney, Locke, and all who had told the people the great fundamental truth on which the revolution was built, by which it was preserved, and on which it now stands. The right hon. gentleman has declared, that, if a parliament is not competent to a union by the surrender of the trust reposed in it by its constituents, you, Mr. Speaker, and all of us here are usurpers. I tell him that if his doctrine respecting a sovereignty in abeyance on the part of the people be true, his majesty now on the throne is a usurper; the House of Brunswick have been all usurpers; the Revolution was a foul rebellion, and our present constitution an unprincipled usurpation. But, no, Sir, his majesty holding the crown by the first of all titles, the free choice of a free nation, must know the value of the principle which allows the people that choice, and the constitution never can be praised by us, their representatives, but with a grateful remembrance of that sovereignty by which it was obtained for us. Mr. Sheridan concluded, with earnestly exhorting ministers to give up the measure altogether, or at least, to take a more favourable time for proposing it.

Mr. *Windham* said, it had been urged as if the union were a measure proposed for the advantage of England at the expense of Ireland; whereas, in his mind, something very near the reverse of that proposition was the case; he, therefore, could not help feeling a little impatience at the manner in which it had been received in Ireland. It was so much the habit of his mind to resist all change, where things were well, that nothing but the sense of a pressing necessity could induce him to consent to the change which the present measure, if carried into effect, would occasion. It was his conviction, at the commencement of the present war, that England could get nothing by the changes which were agitating the world; and what he thought then he thought now. England had so much to lose, and so little to gain, by a union with Ireland, while, on the contrary, Ireland had so much to gain, and so little to lose, that the advantages might, in truth, be said to be all on one side; but still, the feeling of a strong necessity would induce him to forego all his abhorrence and dread of innovation, and give his assent to the proposition of a union with Ireland. The disorders of that kingdom, in his mind, were to be ascribed to various causes, but they chiefly grew out of the nature of its constitution, which, like a body distorted and misshapen, gave rise to various diseases, some of them lingering, and some of them acute, but which being inherent in its frame, no medicine could eradicate. The deformity of this constitution was its coercive form. It was like a garrison in the midst of a conquered town; a mere provisional government, which, whether it had lasted one century or three, was still a provisional government, deriving its existence, form, and power, from another state.—Much of the distraction also of Ireland arose from the barbarous ignorance of its people, who were made ferocious from the animosities which existed among themselves, and which ferocity gave occasion to new restraints on the part of the government, and which again redoubled the

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fury of the people, so that government stood in the same relation to them, as the man did to the wolf which he had by the ears, and which he could neither hold nor let go. The constitution, and the barbarous ignorance of the people which grew out of that constitution, were the remote causes of the distractions in Ireland, but the proximate cause was undoubtedly the inoculation of French principles—

"That leperous distilment, whose effect
Holds such an enmity with blood of man,"

that it can never enter without producing death. Unfortunately, the contamination had reached Ireland, and to its baneful influence they were to attribute the late horrible disorders of that kingdom. An ancient philosopher had said, that the people were like a sea, that the breath of demagogues could stir into commotion. If this were true, what a sea was the people of Ireland for the demagogues of France to stir! Government was charged with the imputation of corrupting the parliament of Ireland. Corruption was not a solitary vice; it required two parties to constitute the crime—the corruptor and the corrupted. Now, if it were true that the parliament of Ireland was of a nature to be corrupted, what would be the consequence of the government's abstaining? Corruption disappointed might degenerate into faction, and its tendencies ungratified might be more mischievous than if directed into the line of duty. The only remedy that he saw for the condition of Ireland was, to meliorate the state of the lower orders; and this could only be done by an infusion of British capital and British manners. How was this to be done? By giving security to those who should settle in the country; and a union bade fairer for that security, than any other measure that could be adopted. In all the late horrible distractions of Ireland, there was one thing which afforded him much consolation; and it was, that religion mixed in their rebellion. This proved satisfactorily to his mind, that the Irish were not Jacobins, and consequently that, with all their phrenzy, that they were reclaimable. Wherever we had religion, we had not pure Jacobinism. Wherever there was religion there was hope, there was a foundation to work upon; but Jacobinism was incurable. It was the loss of substance which no medicine could supply; but mere religious rage was but a wound, which skill and proper treatment might heal. He had no doubt but that, when the present fury should have evaporated, he should see the people of Ireland as eager for the measure as they now were against it. It was not intended now to press the measure, but to show the principle so clearly, as that they should not mistake the advantages which were offered to them. He wished, therefore, to appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober; he wished to appeal from the Irish, mad with independence, that is to say, independent of reason, independent of argument, to the Irish in a fit mood to examine the proposition that was offered them. The gentleman wished to postpone it until there should be a season of perfect sobriety and temper; but while the causes of irritation remained, was not this putting it off *ad græcas calendas*? An hon. gentleman had said, that the Irish people were not now in a state to give their assent freely; and yet they had given their dissent freely. It partook a little of the confusion of Irish logic, to say that a body which had given its dissent freely, could not give its assent with equal freedom. But this is the mode in which the hon. gentleman chooses to illustrate his doctrine by example. Gentlemen talk of the unanimity of opinion which prevails in Ireland against this measure: Sir, I by no means think that voice and opinion are synonymous terms. A dextrous party can, we know, create a cry throughout the country, when the opinion of solid, thinking people is quite the other way; and I am sure that the dispassionate people of that country are in its favour. The intention of making some proposition of this kind, has been long known, and yet it did not at first excite such a clamour. The strongest argument that has been brought against this measure is national pride; but that was not mentioned when this subject was first proposed; and, indeed, I think the advantages which belong to this measure fully balance any feeling of that kind. Many persons of sense, natives of that country, I know were in favour of the measure: they can have had no reason to change their opinions, and therefore I conclude those opinions still exist, though at present drowned in the general clamour. My right hon. friend has very fully and ably explained the situation of Scotland, and the benefits it has derived from the Union. I do not mean to say that all her prosperity has arisen from the Union; but it surely is a fair argument to say, that that

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Union has had considerable effect in producing it. I say, it is not disrespectful to the parliament of Ireland for us to proceed: we have a right to lay the measure in the view of that country, that it may decide upon it, not by passion, but by cool deliberation. The House certainly is not bound, in vindication of its character, to proceed; but if it entertains an opinion in favour of a union, I think it will act wisely in going into a committee upon the resolutions. It is true that the resolutions might be made known to Ireland without their having been agreed to by the parliament of England; but is there not a material difference between having them published in a pamphlet, and their being agreed to by the parliament of Great Britain? Gentlemen have not shown us in what this disrespect consists; but if we merely state the grounds upon which we have agreed to the measure, and then add, that we have only agreed to it as conceiving it to be beneficial to Ireland, I cannot conceive how it can be considered as disrespectful to that country.—The hon. gentleman has gone into an argument upon the general competence of parliament. On this subject I should have no objection to enter into a discussion with him, if this were a proper time. I, however, perfectly agree with the opinion advanced by my right hon. friend, that there is no such thing as a sovereign power *in abeyance* in the people. Whether there may exist any moral right which may be exercised in extreme cases, is another question; the imagination of man can conceive such a moral right, but I am convinced there is no such political right. I am sure the hon. gentleman will not find any thing at our Revolution, or connected with our constitution, which will justify such a doctrine; but, on the contrary, the greatest pains to prevent any idea of that kind being established.

Mr. *Tierney* said:—Sir; I never thought the right hon. gentleman would have brought forward a measure like this, without having examined, in the first instance, whether or not it was likely to be acceptable; nor did I think, after what has passed, that he would have persevered in it. He has, however, thought proper to persevere, and he must take the consequences. What advantages can be gained by a union, which cannot be obtained without it? I am clearly of opinion, that these resolutions would produce the same effect if they were sent over without parliament being pledged to them. It is said that we abused the Irish parliament: if gentlemen allude to the statement of there being 116 placemen in it, that assertion was made in the parliament of Ireland.—I really do not see that the advantages which the measure holds out are likely to compensate for the danger that may result from it. Much has been said of the advantages it holds out to the Catholics. All that you can now give them is, the privilege of holding certain places, and of sitting in parliament: but the latter would be a very trifling privilege; for such is the distribution of property in that country, that in fifty years, fifty Catholics would not get seats in parliament. I do not think that the measure would prevent the attempts of the enemy, nor put an end to intestine troubles; for we now see that its effects would be to create still greater divisions than exist at present in that unhappy country. It has been said, that there are many instances in which the competence of parliament has been tried, and the Union with Scotland has been alluded to; but that does not appear to me to be in point, for I think the parliament can do every thing but destroy themselves, and in the case of the Scotch Union the parliament of England did not destroy themselves; and this is, I think, a very obvious distinction. It is said, that something must be done for Ireland; and then we are told, that these resolutions are not to be acted upon: if so, I should be glad to be informed what is to be done for Ireland. No doubt, the people of Ireland will treat the right hon. gentleman's resolutions as they have treated his speech—that they will paste them on the walls as arguments against the union. If this were all, I should not mind it; but if you agree to the motion, it will not be the ministers, but the parliament of England that is implicated. If you persevere, every step you take will be looked upon with suspicion. If you send over more troops, the object may be misrepresented. One of the strongest reasons against this measure is, that there is no necessity for its immediate adoption. I am, by no means, contending, that it is radically a bad measure, or that we ought to abandon it for ever, but after the opinion which has been expressed in the Irish parliament, and throughout that country, against it, the minister ought, at least for the present, to abstain from pressing it. It is said, that the parliament of Ireland may change

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their opinion upon this subject. I am by no means inclined to think so; but I am sure there is much less probability that the people of Ireland should be brought to change an opinion which they have almost unanimously expressed. Considering this subject in another point of view, I cannot but recollect that I stand here representing commercial people, and I think I should betray their interests, if I pledged myself unnecessarily to resolutions by which they may be ultimately affected. I cannot conceive upon what principle I, as a British member of parliament, should pledge myself to certain resolutions, when the parliament of Ireland refuse to pledge themselves to any thing. I cannot conceive why we should pledge ourselves to give up a part of our constitution, while the parliament of Ireland have declared they will not give up any part of their's. If, however, we are to have these members from Ireland, they ought at least to be purified before they come here. I do not refer to any idea of parliamentary corruption, but to a statement of Mr. Cook's, who says that they are chosen in Ireland merely for the purpose of keeping out the Catholics. On what principle is it that the number of spiritual peers is to be increased in the other House? It cannot be said that the reverend bishops are inattentive to the interests of the church, and that we must have some from Ireland, in order to secure the Protestant ascendancy. As Ireland has rejected all consideration of the subject, why pledge ourselves to resolutions which we may find hereafter extremely inconvenient? I am afraid the truth of all this is, that the right hon. gentleman's pride has been hurt. I have heard that he has not yet forgiven the parliament of Ireland, for their conduct upon the propositions; but all I ask of him is, that we should not be made parties to his resentment. If he is determined to play Guy Faux towards the parliament of Ireland, let him do it, if he pleases, but let us not furnish him with a cloak and dark lantern. Deprecating, as I do, the farther progress of this measure, I implore the right hon. gentleman and the House not to persevere in it at present.

Mr. *W. Grant* said:—The object, Sir, of those gentlemen who oppose your leaving the chair is, to prevent the discussion of these propositions, because, they say, the discussion of them at present may be productive of mischief; and, in order to prove the propriety of not doing it, they have entered very fully into that discussion. They say, we think the measure you have proposed is wrong; and we also think you ought not to have an opportunity of showing that it is right by going into the committee; we are not pledged to adopt the propositions. The arguments against your leaving the chair are three: In the first place, that it is not a proper time for the measure, because, in the present situation of Ireland, the free assent of that country cannot be obtained. The second was, that the Irish parliament could not give their assent; and the third, that after what has passed in that country, the discussion is unnecessary and improper; unnecessary, because it can have no effect; and improper, because it may tend to increase the animosities that now exist in that country. With respect to the first objection, that the Irish parliament is in that situation that it cannot give a free assent, that objection has been answered by an hon. gentleman on this side of the House; because, if it be admitted that they can give a free dissent, it follows that they had the power of assenting if they chose. But the hon. gentleman says "No; because their assent may be forced." This argument implies that we are to employ force to obtain it. But if it appears that you do not employ force, then the argument falls to the ground. If there was any reasonable ground for supposing that the deliberations of the parliament of Ireland were influenced or governed by force, then indeed the hon. gentleman might say that it could not give a free assent; but is there any thing in the situation of Ireland which shows that they were not perfectly free to decide this question in any manner they thought proper? He undertakes to assert, that Ireland is not free, when Ireland herself asserts that she is. As to the competence of the parliament of Ireland to adopt this measure, I can only say, that if that parliament cannot do it, there exists no power that can. This question about the competence of parliament, is one that admits of much discussion; and perhaps when we had done, it would be found that there was not much real difference of opinion between us. It might be found, perhaps, that I was thinking of moral, while others were thinking of legal competence. Parliament is morally incompetent to do any thing that is wrong; but parliament is legally competent to do any

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thing. Parliament may do that which the people at large may do for themselves. This is my idea of the competence of parliament. But the arguments of the hon. gentleman go to show, that there is no remedy for an evil which is admitted to exist; for if there is no competence in parliament, it does not exist any where. It may be said, that competence resides in the people at large; but how can you collect the sense of the people? Would you assemble them in convention on Salisbury plain? If you lay down rules by which their sense is to be determined, then you influence their determination: besides, if the question is to be decided by the people at large, what right have you to make rules for them at all? How is it to be decided who shall have a right to assist at the determination, whether persons of twenty years of age shall or shall not have that right? But the hon. gentleman seems to think, that the assent would be good if the electors agreed to it. I should be glad to know why, if the parliament is incompetent, the electors are competent? They themselves exist like the parliament, only in consequence of the constitution, and the body of the people might say to them, "You, the electors, can do no more constitutionally than what the parliament could, and consequently must resort back to us." I have already shown, that, arguing upon first principles, the suffrages of the people can never be taken; and the consequence then must be, that there exists no mode whatever by which a nation, either collectively or through its representatives, can give its assent to a measure of this kind; so that if every man in the two kingdoms were perfectly agreed as to the beneficial consequences of the measure, by this mode of reasoning, they would be rendered perfectly helpless, and unable to effect an object which they knew was for their common good. For even if you could suppose that every man's vote could be taken upon the question, yet that would not be sufficient, unless every man voted for it; because you have no right to say that the majority shall determine the question, for the first point they would have to discuss would be, whether the majority should or should not decide. The hon. gentleman has alluded to the case of the Revolution, but I do not think it has furnished him with any argument in support of his opinion.—With respect to the last objection, namely, that we ought not to consider it after what has passed in Ireland, because it would tend to inflame the passions of the people in that country—this I consider as not treating the parliament of Ireland with respect; it is rather treating them like children than as men of rational understandings; but if the gentleman contends, that by persisting in this measure we shall treat the parliament of Ireland with disrespect, he reduces us to a curious dilemma. If this measure is ever to be passed by both countries, it must be passed on the same day, or on different days: if it be passed on the same day, the consequence must be, that it must be passed in the dark, because neither can know what the other will agree to: if it be passed on different days, then we are open to this objection, that we ought not to pass the measure until we know whether the Irish parliament will accept of it or not, and consequently the objection will be eternal. It seems to me, that as the vote which has passed in the Irish House of Commons was, that the subject should not be taken into consideration, that it is more incumbent upon ministers to bring forward the propositions, and that the House should agree to them, if upon consideration they think they ought to do so. It would be highly improper in us, wishing that a union should take place, to leave them in ignorance of the terms we meant to propose; we owe it, therefore, to the people of Ireland to state them: we owe it also particularly to those who, in that country, are in favour of the union. The consequence of keeping back the propositions will be, that every man who is inimical to the union will have an opportunity of representing them just as he pleases. If this were a case of two hostile nations opening a negotiation with each other for a peace, and the one found the other unwilling to listen to the first general overture for negotiation, then it might not be prudent to produce the terms meant to be offered, because the continuance of the contest might produce a change in our situation; but between two nations, situated as Great Britain and Ireland are, surely it is the most generous, open, and liberal policy, to state candidly the terms we meant to propose. If ministers had adopted a different line of conduct, and had dropped the resolutions without making them known, gentlemen would have condemned it as a piece of close policy, and would have said, that ministers

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kept their propositions secret, with the intention of varying them as circumstances altered. It is stated, that this is an attack upon the independence of Ireland: it cannot be necessary to enter into any arguments to refute this proposition, because the measure itself is founded upon a recognition of its independence. The parliaments of the two countries are put upon an equal footing, and nothing can be done without the mutual consent of both. How, then, can this be considered as an attack upon her independence? The first two men that entered into society were independent of each other; but if one of them proposed to come to some agreement for their mutual benefit and safety, it could not be considered as an attack upon the independence of the other. With respect to the settlement of 1782, I think it can in no sense be understood as precluding the two parliaments from treating with each other. can it for a moment be contended, that by that measure the parliaments of the two countries disabled themselves for ever from making any propositions, however calculated to their mutual advantage? Without entering into the views of the persons by whom that settlement was made, it is only necessary to say that there was nothing at that time finally settled. There was indeed something unsettled, and nothing substituted in its place.

Mr. *W. Smith* did not think the union absolutely a bad measure, but contended, that having been rejected by the Irish parliament, we ought not to persevere in it at present.

The House divided:

Tellers.

YEAS	Lord Viscount Belgrave - Mr. Sargent - - - -	149
NOES	Mr. Grey - - - - - Mr. Tierney - - - -	24

The House then resolved itself into the said Committee; Mr. Douglas in the chair. Mr. Pitt moved the Resolutions *pro formâ;* after which the House resumed, the chairman reported progress, and asked leave to sit again.

List of the Minority.

Barclay, G.
Biddulph, R.
Bird, W. W.
Cavendish, lord G.
Cooke, Brian
Combe, alderman
Denison, W. J.
Dundas, hon. L.
Hobhouse, B.
Jeffries, N.
Jekyll, J.
Jones, J. T.
Laurence, Dr.
Leicester, sir J.
North, D.
Plomer, W.
Pulteney, sir W.
Richardson, J.
Russell, lord J.
Russell, lord W.
Sheridan, R. B.
St. John, hon. St. A.
Smith, W.
Wilson J.

TELLERS.

Grey, C.
Tierney, G.

Feb. 11. On the order of the day being read, for the House to resolve itself into a Committee to consider further of his majesty's Message,

Mr. *Sheridan* said, it certainly was not his intention to say any thing more against going into the committee, but he understood that some hon. friends of his meant to take occasion of doing so this night, having hitherto had no other opportunity; at the same time he would fairly own, that whatever had the effect of delaying this measure, was in itself far from being reprehensible, and would, if duly considered, be received by gentlemen on the other side as a boon. He now rose, because he felt it incumbent on him to propose an instruction to the committee. This he knew it was in his power to move in the committee itself by way of resolution, but he considered this to be preferable to that mode of proceeding. The question had been twice discussed, and at each discussion it had been decided that the Speaker should leave the chair upon the measure now before the House; but the House had as yet not made itself responsible for the project of the right hon. gentleman, and therefore any other member might, with strict regularity, bring forward whatever measure he might think fit. The proposition which he had to make had for its object the putting an end to those religious feuds which were so much complained of by the right hon. gentleman, as existing in Ireland. He did not mean that any steps should be taken for that purpose which should have the least appearance of trenching upon the independence of the Irish parliament; he had taken care to word his motion so, as to avoid any such construction. He intended that its operation should be left entirely to the force of example, which, aided by the stronger necessity that existed for its application in the unhappy circumstances of the sister kingdom, would, he had no doubt, speedily incline the independent legislature of that country to its spontaneous adoption. He did not conceive that the right hon. gentleman would contend that the time was im-

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proper for such a measure. Whether its fitness at the present crisis would or would not be disputed, it possessed this recommendation at least, that it was considered by his majesty's ministers in 1795 to be a measure of prudence, safety, and indispensable necessity. [Here Mr. Sheridan read an extract from earl Fitzwilliam's Letters to lord Carlisle, stating the agreement of the duke of Portland and Mr. Pitt in the opinion that the emancipation of the Catholics was necessary for the preservation of Ireland, and that though it was thought more advisable to delay the measure until a period of greater tranquillity, yet that, if brought forward, he was authorized to give it a handsome support on the part of government.] Thus the measure which he wished to be given in instruction to the committee was then considered by the gentlemen opposite to be consonant to the principles of sound policy and justice. He would be glad to know, whether the events which had since happened in that distracted country, and all of which had been predicted by earl Fitzwilliam, were not such as to induce the right hon. gentleman to regret, from the bottom of his heart, that he had not permitted the measure to be brought forward at that time. If he should say, after witnessing the melancholy consequences of the recall of that nobleman, that he still felt no regret at the proceeding of the British cabinet, the House and the whole country would certainly hear that avowal with astonishment. Considerations of much weightier importance than any that could arise from mere curiosity, required that the right hon. gentleman should explain the motives of that sudden change in his sentiments. His present gestures seemed to indicate that there had been no change. The natural inference then was, that when he appeared to countenance the scheme of emancipation, he never entertained any idea of carrying it into execution, and that he sent over lord Fitzwilliam merely to dupe the Irish Catholics for a time, to suit his own purposes. To this conclusion, however, it was not very probable that the right hon. gentleman would accede, for it would incur a much stronger imputation on his character than an acknowledgment that he had changed his mind upon the question of emancipation, in consequence of unfitness of time, or change of circumstances. But either he must submit to that imputation or it would be incumbent on him to show very strong reasons for suddenly abandoning a measure, which he admitted to be of more service to the British empire than any thing that could happen short of union. The primary object of lord Fitzwilliam's administration was, the complete emancipation of the Catholics. It was known by every member of the Irish parliament, and to every man in the country. It was equally well known that it constituted the avowed ground of his recall: and yet so far was it from exciting their displeasure, that there never was a lord lieutenant who left Ireland with testimonies of more general regret for his departure. The right hon. gentleman had broadly stated, that it was frivolous to assert that the settlement of 1782 was final, or to suppose that it was then intended that the connexion between the two countries should be entirely left upon that footing, that the evils which had since arisen could be no otherwise radically cured than by a union, and that this remedy, if not adopted now, might be put off *ad Græcas kalendas*. Was it to be inferred from this, that abandoning all idea of the necessity of the free consent of the Irish nation, and considering their representatives as worthy of being put in strait-waistcoats, he would proceed at once to cram it down their throats? He had said, that he wished to wait for a moment of calm, when the irritation occasioned by the first view of the measure should subside, and its many advantages could be impartially considered; yet his conduct was in direct contradiction to this principle, for he loudly talked of the necessity of an immediate remedy. There was an opposition between his professions and proceedings which was apparently inexplicable. If the right hon. gentleman would avow that he designed to carry it by coercion, his anxiety to have his resolutions carried would then excite no surprise. But if it was his real intention to wait for the result of calm and temperate discussion in the Irish parliament, what security could he give that the adoption of it would not equally be put off *ad Græcas kalendas*?—The remedy of an union was, then, contingent and precarious; but that which his motion contained was of present use, and whether applied by the British or the Irish parliament, in the first instance, would be productive of the most beneficial effects. The right hon. gentleman expressed a hope, that the Irish

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House of Commons would resume the consideration of the measure, in a calm and dispassionate temper. He likewise entertained the same expectation. It was not very likely, indeed, that they would take it up again with much favour, when they reflected upon the strange terms that had been used in that House as applicable to their proceedings, such as intoxication, wolves, &c. &c. But he hoped they would reconsider those prejudices which led them to reject the claims of the Catholics, and generously admit them to a share of the little they had it in their power to give. He hoped they would reflect, that Catholic exclusion was the cause of their own weakness, and had been made a reason of wresting from them their independence. Such were his expectations from the fair and manly manner in which Mr. Barrington and several other members had confessed their former errors. He hoped the Irish parliament would reflect upon how little they could impart to the Catholic, which was no more than the power of sitting with themselves, and being admitted to a share of a few offices; and to this would join the reflection that Britain and Ireland were now almost the only countries in Europe where civil exclusion was still maintained on account of religious distinctions. They would reflect, that if the Irish Catholic acquired the possession of property, it must be through the medium of that industry which would civilize its habits, and fit him for becoming a peaceful and valuable member of the community. When they dispassionately viewed the effects that had arisen in many parts of the continent from the abolition of religious feuds, he hoped they would cast off those absurd prejudices which induced them to consider their Catholic brethren as the advocates of foreign supremacy. He had no doubt that they would re-consider the question, but he had as little doubt that the effect would not be favourable to a union. He would conclude with moving, "That it be an Instruction to the said Committee to consider how far it would be consistent with justice and policy, and conducive to the general interests, and especially to the consolidation of the strength of the British empire, were civil incapacities, on account of religious distinctions, to be done away throughout his majesty's dominions."

Mr. *Pitt* said, that of all the speeches he had ever heard the hon. gentleman make, that which he had just concluded was the most extraordinary; for he began by saying, that though he rose to move an instruction to the committee, yet he did not think any was necessary; that it was equally competent to him to propose his motion in the committee itself; and therefore that he would not oppose the Speaker's leaving the chair. He could hardly think from this strange mode of proceeding, that the hon. gentleman had any serious, intention of persisting in his motion. But passing this over, he would say a few words upon the main object which it professed—which was, the consolidation of Irish Catholics and Protestants. This was certainly a very fit subject for the attention of the House, if it was to be considered as an article of union. Viewed in that respect, the motion very properly embraced the whole extent of the British dominions. But if taken as it had been opened by the hon. gentleman, and the abolition of religious disabilities here was intended to operate by way of example upon Ireland, there were three points which ought to be maturely weighed before the House gave its assent to it:—the first was, what probability there was that the adoption of such a measure by the parliament of Great Britain would induce that of Ireland to adopt it: the second, whether their acceding to it would have the desired effect of annihilating religious animosity: and the third was, supposing these two objects accomplished, how far it would go towards strengthening the connexion between the two countries. Admitting that religious disabilities were abolished here, he could not perceive how it was to operate upon Ireland, which was a separate kingdom. Would the hon. gentleman argue that because they had been taken away in a country where the numbers, property, and power of the Catholics were a mere nothing in comparison with those of the Protestants; they would therefore be destroyed in a nation where almost the whole property of the country was in the hands of the minority, and where the whole Protestant constitution rested upon the foundation of Catholic exclusion? The hon. gentleman might say, that it was a stronger argument in its favour that the Catholics constituted the majority. But he ought to recollect, that the very consideration which would operate most upon a Protestant parliament, was the dread of Catholic ascendancy. With respect to religious feuds,

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he was convinced they could not be so promptly or completely extinguished by any scheme that could be devised as by that of union, which would alone put an end to that disparity and weakness which now occasioned the exclusion of the Catholics. He conceived that every concession to the Catholics, while Ireland was a separate country, would tend only to increase that jealousy and hostility between the two sects, which had too long existed.

The *Speaker* said, that if the House were of opinion, that the tenor of his majesty's message did not warrant the introduction of the motion, to discuss it at present was irregular. If, on the other hand, it did come within the power of the committee, it was not regular as at present worded. It was necessary that, after the word "consider," the words "in the first instance," be inserted.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, he would assent to the proposed amendment. Nothing could be more silly than to say, that he attacked the independence of the Irish parliament. This was a strange comment upon his motion, by a man who had himself brought forward resolutions tending to procure a total surrender of that independence. He had argued, that it was unsafe to grant Catholic emancipation without union; why, then, had he authorized lord Fitzwilliam to promise it? Why had he raised that expectation in the minds of the Catholics, of the fallacy of which he had since endeavoured to convince them by a system of cruel massacre and torture of every denomination? The House, in adopting his motion, would only repeat the sentiments of his majesty's ministers in 1795, and give greater effect to the pledge which they had then given.

Mr. *Pitt*:—I repeat, that nothing I have said can be fairly construed to be inconsistent with the acknowledgment of the independence of the Irish parliament. The present measure grows out of that acknowledgment, and is a proposal to do something by no means inconsistent with that independence. What the hon. gentleman proposes is, to do something which, I apprehend, the British parliament will be of opinion it is incumbent upon the Irish parliament to do themselves. He proposes that, in the year 1799, the British parliament should declare, for the greater security of the Irish Catholics, that, without a union, they should be entitled to all the privileges of Protestant subjects. Now, what can he mean by this, but that the parliament of Britain should hold out encouragement to the Catholics of Ireland to expect what, as a distinct legislature, we have no right to dictate to the parliament of Ireland? But here, Sir, in referring to the transactions of 1795, I must again and again deny, that the circumstance of refusing to give to the Irish Catholics, at that time, their requests, was the cause of the insurrections which have since taken place. We have vouchers sufficient, and on testimony not easy to be erased—the testimony of the hon. gentleman's friend, and in defence of whose character he has appeared upon oath—that the insurrection of Ireland did not originate from this cause, that it did not arise from any thing which lord Fitzwilliam held out to Ireland having been afterwards withdrawn. As I formerly asserted, I now aver, that there were no hopes which lord Fitzwilliam was directed to hold out to Ireland, and which were afterwards withdrawn; and I assert, that the cabinet of this country never gave him any such authority, and that therefore such authority never remained to be withdrawn.

Mr. Sheridan's motion was then negatived, without a division.—On the question being put, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the chair,"

General *Fitzpatrick* said, that in 1782, he was officially employed in carrying into effect what he would venture to say was then universally considered as a final adjustment between this country and Ireland. He would affirm, that if ever there was a compact solemnly entered into, between any one state or kingdom with another, binding upon both, the compact of 1782 was of that description. It might be said, that the union now proposed was not inconsistent with that settlement. But no two things could be more inconsistent with one another than the recent speech of the minister and the spirit of the settlement of 1782. This union, he said, grows out of the independence of the parliament of Ireland, that was to say, out of the settlement of 1782. Now, to bring a measure into one parliament and to enter into resolutions upon it, that is to say, in the British parliament, by which the other, that is to say, the Irish parliament, is to surrender to the other, was totally inconsistent with the independence of the parliament of Ireland which was established in 1782. He would say, that the inde-

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pendence of the Irish parliament must be sacrificed before any union could take place.—But to return to the establishment of the independence of the legislature of Ireland. He had a seat in the House of Commons there when the resolutions passed in 1782. He held, at that time, an official situation. It was wished, at that time, to talk them over, which they were very fully, after they came to that assembly. The whole of that assembly almost was well disposed to these resolutions; but there was one member of that House, who was afterwards a member of this, who was not very well disposed to them—he meant Mr. Flood. He called on him, as an official person in that House, to say, whether there was any other measure to be grounded on that resolution? to which he answered, and assured that gentleman, from the authority of those with whom he acted, that there was no constitutional measure to be brought forward. Surely the union was a constitutional point, and therefore was so far inconsistent with the settlement of 1782. He would venture to say, that for the fifteen years following this resolution, there had been no doubt entertained upon the independence of the Irish legislature in a constitutional point of view. He was, therefore, surprised to hear the right hon. gentleman say any thing of a slight nature against the settlement of 1782. It was a settlement which not only had the approbation of the right hon. gentleman, but of many of those who were now his friends and adherents. Lord Auckland (then Mr. Eden) moved the repeal of the statute of the 6th of George 1st. Now, the right hon. gentleman called the settlement of 1782 a childish settlement; upon what ground, he knew not. He seemed to think much of the difference which took place between the parliament of this country and that of Ireland upon the question of the regency: that was a dispute which fortunately never came to an issue; but all difference upon that subject might be laid aside for ever by a single act: and indeed he saw no reason why the spirit of the law, which provides that the same personage shall hold the sovereignty of both countries, should not be extended to the case of a regency. It would certainly be just and salutary to have such an act, and it was easy to make one, and therefore it was childish to object to the two independent parliaments existing together on that ground.—He knew of nothing in the conduct of the French, that, in point of breach of faith, was more atrocious than this measure would be towards Ireland if carried by the British parliament. Not even the conduct of the French in Switzerland was worse than this. It was not necessary, in the view he had of the measure, to say any thing about terms; the whole was founded upon a flagrant breach of faith. The better the terms appeared to be, the more he should, perhaps, be induced to dread them—"Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes."—For what security would the Irish have for the continuance of these good terms? How could they enforce them from those who were stronger than themselves? He should be glad to know, when the Imperial parliament met, what chance Cork, which was said to be a place in which this measure was approved of, would have with Bristol, if the interests of the two cities should clash? He could not help remembering that Mr. Burke lost his seat for Bristol, in consequence of the share he took in a measure supposed to have been advantageous to Ireland. If this measure had originated in Ireland, the entertaining it here might be fair, but that it should originate in the British parliament was abominable. Without complimenting the parliament of Ireland, he had not so mean an opinion of their common sense, as to think they would consent to annihilate, at a blow, the whole of the constitution of their country. Accordingly they had decidedly declared against the measure, and it was universally odious to the people of Ireland. Under all these circumstances, he was unable to comprehend the reason of the right hon. gentleman's persisting in this measure.

Mr. *Ryder* said, that the right hon. general had assigned, as a principal reason for his opposition, a desire to justify himself from any charge of inconsistency. This, however, was founded upon an erroneous idea of the present measure; as if the right hon. general's opposition to the union was necessary to the consistency of his conduct as a supporter of the independence acquired by Ireland in 1782; whereas, the measure proposed, instead of violating that independence, was in itself the strongest recognition of it. This was the opinion of many of the most active supporters of the measure of 1782. Those very gentlemen who brought forward the repeal of the 6th of George 1st, had it undoubtedly in their minds to proceed to

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some farther measures, as necessary to the permanent connexion of the two kingdoms. If any imputation was thrown upon the government of that day, it was thrown by the right hon. general and his friends, who represented that government as supposing that the repeal of the 6th of George 1st was all that was necessary—in direct contradiction to their own declarations at the time and at subsequent periods, as well as to the unanimous resolution of the House, passed after the resolution for the repeal of that act. The members of that administration did not consider it as a final settlement. The general application of this term had led to error: a final settlement it certainly was, in the limited sense in which only it should be understood, as relating to the independence of Ireland; but as a final settlement of all points, imperial and commercial, between the two countries, it never was regarded or intended to be understood. He might refer to what was now almost become history, to prove that the language of the secretary of state, who moved that repeal and that resolution, was inconsistent with the idea that a final settlement could be accomplished by that repeal alone. Was it not even then stated by him, that after parliament had done what it was conceived necessary for it then to do, it was the duty of the Crown to look to the rest. The business might be begun by his majesty's servants in Ireland—negociations might be entered upon by commissioners, and a treaty established, which should be sanctioned by the most solemn forms of the constitutions of both countries.—That the settlement of 1782 was final in the most extended sense, could not be contended to be the opinion of the parliament in 1783, which passed an act for completing what was left imperfect in the only point which was then settled: still less could it have been the opinion of the parliament in 1785, which adopted the commercial propositions, involving not only regulations of trade, but the most important questions of navigation and revenue. The right hon. gentleman before alluded to, had indeed declared, at that period, in opposition to those propositions, that the questions reserved for consideration in 1782, were of an imperial, and not of a commercial nature. The right hon. general now conceived they were commercial, and not imperial. He must leave the right hon. general and his absent friend to settle this difference as they pleased: both equally proved the point for which he was contending.—If the right hon. general was right in his assertion, that by entertaining the present question, the House was acting against the independence then finally settled, that would preclude, no doubt, all discussion upon the subject; for if it were a breach of faith to open a negotiation between two independent kingdoms with independent legislatures, for the purpose of an arrangement of points essential to their interest, by mutual consent, on fair and equitable terms, such a breach of faith had certainly been committed by the proposal of the present measure.—But he would ask the right hon. general, how far he meant to carry this argument? In the present case, he seemed, indeed, to wish to narrow the ground, merely on account of the relative situation of Ireland, which being less than England, must consequently have a less share than England in the imperial legislature. Did the right hon. general mean to contend, that, in all cases of union, the two countries uniting must be of the same extent, in population numerically equal, and singularly circumstanced in every particular, or else that the smaller country must, by uniting, give up its independence? Suppose this perfect equality, even then, according to these doctrines, independence must be given up on both sides, as it might then be contended that it was far from the same thing to have the sole management of your own concerns, and to share that management jointly with another. These principles might, indeed, be pushed much farther; but the real question was, whether a union would be ultimately for the interest, not only of the country of greater extent, wealth, and population, but also of that which had the less, and would be likely to contribute equally to the strength and prosperity of both? On this point, experience fully confirmed the dictates of reason. Was Yorkshire less attended to than Cornwall? Were the interests of Wales or of Scotland, whose representatives bore so small a proportion to those of England, the less attended to on that account? If, then, a union should take place with Ireland, what reason was there to suppose that the same beneficial effects would not be felt, which have followed the union with Scotland, and all our other unions, or that her inferiority in wealth, population, and extent, and consequently in representation, should render her less an object of the impartial care of an im-

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perial legislature? The right hon. general appeared to take it for granted, that that distinctness of interests must continue after a union, which it was the main object of that measure to annihilate for ever. The right hon. general had stated, as an illustration, that the people of Cork would be extremely deceived if they flattered themselves with an increase of commercial prosperity from the union. And what was his reason for inspiring them with that distrust? Why, because Mr. Burke had lost his seat at Bristol, in consequence of his supporting a question favourable to the commerce of Ireland. If, before a union, the member for Bristol could support a question favourable to Cork; and if, in spite of the rivality of Bristol, such a question could be carried in the parliament of Great Britain, what ground could there be to imagine, that, subsequent to a union, such rivality would be more successful? Would not every real ground of jealousy which that city, or any other, might entertain respecting Ireland, be done away by that measure? and would not the only bar be removed, which was now the obstacle to her full participation of all the commercial prosperity of this country? But the right hon. general thought she could have no security for those advantages. Had not the commercial advantages been conferred on Ireland, before a union, which she now continued to enjoy? And was it natural to suppose, that when they became rights, they would be less secure than when they were favours?—With respect to the object of this plan, and the means of effecting it, the right hon. general had thought proper to institute a parallel between the conduct of this country and that of France. If, amongst the recent events in Europe, there was one more particularly calculated to excite feelings of pity and indignation, it was the revolution of Switzerland. That in the wide range of his imagination, the right hon. general should be able to find one common feature between the two measures; that from all the infamous projects in which France had been engaged, her conduct to the Swiss should be selected for a comparison with the proposition made to Ireland, excited in his mind the greatest astonishment at the strange shape in which some facts presented themselves to the minds of some men. A revolution attended with such atrocious circumstances was compared—to what? To a statement intended to be laid, by the parliament of this country, before the parliament of Ireland, of the terms of fairness and equality, upon which they conceived a union might be formed for their mutual advantage and security. A statement, to enforce which no arms were proposed to be used, but those of reason—a statement which appealed to calm and deliberate consideration, because such a discussion the question had not yet received; and because we hoped, when these advantages were laid before the people of Ireland, that cool and deliberate consideration would remove all the objections now entertained against the consolidation of two independent parliaments into one common legislature.

Mr. *Pitt* said:—I beg leave, Sir, to offer a few words upon the final adjustment on which gentlemen place such great reliance. I mean the adjustment of 1782, in which the right hon. general was peculiarly concerned, and in which I am also said to have had a considerable share. I think it necessary once for all to state, that I never said it could not be altered; I only maintained that it was to be considered as a final recognition of the independence of Ireland. But so far from considering it as a final settlement between the two countries, I was decidedly of opinion, that it only led to future arrangements between them. This sense of that measure was most unequivocally understood, and could not at that period be liable to misconstruction or perversion. The lord lieutenant, to whom the right hon. general was secretary, went to Ireland with that express view; and such was the opinion of his right hon. friend (Mr. Fox), who is occasionally absent from this House, who gave it as his conviction, that the country was pledged to bring about a final adjustment. The present measure has naturally grown out of the adjustment of 1782; consequently that arrangement was incomplete. In support of this, I have only to refer to the Journals of the House. It was resolved, after the adjustment of 1782, that the connexion between both kingdoms should be settled on a solid and permanent basis. If the opinion of this House is to be considered as of importance, it must follow, that the connexion was not then finally settled. It is, on the contrary, evident, that a farther agreement was deemed absolutely necessary. But as no doubt can exist, with respect to the full recognition of the independence of Ireland, I ask,

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taking that independence in its most unqualified sense, was it sufficient to establish the connexion, while it was held a positive doctrine that some farther points should be discussed and agreed to? This subject gives rise to another consideration against the final adjustment of 1782. The acknowledged and established independence of two separate legislatures has been advanced as a reason of conciliation between them; but if this reason be properly weighed, it will be found to operate in a contrary way, since the very separation of their rights and powers is more calculated to disunite than to conciliate. Having said so much on this point, I feel it important to sift it to the bottom. In consequence of the statement made by the parliament of Ireland, against the power claimed by the parliament of Great Britain, of making laws for them, a bill was judged wanting to repeal the act of George 1st, and a motion to that effect was assented to by the British parliament. This power assumed was therefore laid aside by the repeal of the Declaratory law. After this had passed, an address to his majesty was carried, praying him to take such farther measures as might appear to him proper to strengthen the connexion between the two countries. A resolution of the committee stated, that it was hoped his majesty would be graciously pleased to take such measures as would establish the connexion on a solid and permanent basis. And what, Sir, was the consequence of that resolution? The next day, Mr. Secretary Fox reported to the House, his majesty's most gracious answer, "That he would take such measures as might be necessary for that purpose." With the view of fulfilling that important object, the duke of Portland was sent to Ireland, with the right hon. gentleman as his secretary, and I now ask him, were there not instructions given to him then for the accomplishment of the farther arrangements? I hope he will answer me, Yes or No. Does he say that there was no pledge given to establish the connexion between both kingdoms? The right hon. gentleman says, that his recollection of what passed when he was in office is clear and perfect. I do not exactly know what he means by the observation, unless he means that it is more pleasing to recollect transactions which have passed during the time he remained in office, and that he thinks it less pleasant to remember circumstances which have happened since he left his official situation, and wipes them over by the deficiency of memory. I acquit the hon. general of being any party to the acknowledged plan of promoting the connexion by farther measures; but if he will consult certain documents, he will find that the great and primary object of the noble duke's filling the situation of lord lieutenant was, to complete the connexion which had been left defective by the adjustment of 1782. I do not hesitate to affirm, that the mind of the noble duke, on that occasion, never failed to be impressed with the substitution of some new system for the settlement of 1782; and I maintain, that that system was not a system confined to commercial considerations, but extending to questions of imperial regulation and arrangement. This was, I repeat, the constant object of the noble duke, while the hon. general was secretary in Ireland. I am ready to furnish proofs of what I advance; and I maintain, without the fear of being contradicted, that the primary object of the duke, when at the head of the government in Ireland, was directed to the establishment of a new system, calculated to promote and perpetuate the connexion between the two countries. It is very far from my intention to argue, that the settlement of 1782 pledged the parties to the measure of a union; but I contend that it clearly went to the necessity of some new system; and the question now is, whether the proposed union does not essentially constitute that new system? I am decidedly of opinion, that it naturally grows out of what is improperly termed the final adjustment. The right hon. general says, that I was a party to the adjustment of 1782. I admit that, in point of fact, I was; but if the right hon. general means that I expressed decided opinions, and took an active part on that occasion, I must deny the charge. I believe I did not open my mouth on the subject. I was not in an official situation, and had no opportunity of knowing the intentions of government but by their public declarations. As a member of parliament, I was ostensibly implicated in the determination of the House. I went so far as to admit the independence of the Irish parliament, but I did not agree to any measure that prevented farther arrangements.

General *Fitzpatrick* said, that though he certainly had access to the official dispatches transmitted to government while

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he acted as secretary to the duke of Portland, it could not be supposed that, after a period of sixteen years, he could be able to speak with accuracy to their contents; but this he could assert, that the objects which the duke at that period had in view (as far as he was acquainted with them) did not relate to any imperial constitutional points. The appointment of commissioners was in agitation, but the arrangements to be considered were not such as the right hon. gentleman had suggested. This much he could state with certainty, that, in the Irish House of Commons, he had said, in answer to Mr. Flood, that it was not in the contemplation of the government to bring forward any thing to affect the final settlement which had been made, or to touch on any constitutional points; and this declaration was made on the arrival of the news of the resolution of this House, which had been insisted upon. It was to be recollected too, that the duke of Portland had been but two months in Ireland in an official situation, his longer stay having been occasioned by a fall from his horse, after he had ceased to have any share in government. It was true that the mode of appointing commissioners for treating of the points in view, was once thought of by the duke, but it was afterwards abandoned, as it was conceived that the business might be done without commissioners.

Mr. *Tierney* said, he had met with an authentic document of the understanding on the business in Ireland in 1782. It was the address of the House of Commons on the resolutions in question. That address was moved by Mr. Grattan, and one clause of it stated, that in consequence of what had been done, no constitutional question could now arise to interrupt the harmony between the two countries. The debate arose on this clause; it was suggested by the recorder of Dublin, that actual recognition, instead of mere repeal of the 6th George 1st, was necessary. He found, in the same authentic record, the speech of his right hon. friend, general Fitzpatrick, on this occasion. That speech stated his right hon. friend to have said, that if the final adjustment was not considered as having settled the whole question, he had no hopes that it ever would be settled. The House divided for the clause, and there was for it 210, and against it only the two tellers. It was to be presumed, then, that the business was considered as settled, and the conduct of the duke of Portland since had shown, that he had considered it in this light.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, that the right hon. gentleman was offended with the comparison to the conduct of France with regard to Switzerland; but in the odium of that comparison, he begged leave to share with his hon. friend, for, in principle, the conduct of the right hon. gentleman was the same as the most Jacobinical proceeding of the Directory. He was not awed by the sounding eloquence of the right hon. gentleman, as he had so often found, that in proportion as his argument was weak, he endeavoured to cover its defects by lofty words. What was the case? Were a French declaimer, with a hundredth part of the right hon. gentleman's powers, to review the history of Ireland, might he not plausibly represent, that after two hundred years of oppression, the independence of Ireland was at last recognized in 1782; that under the advice of British ministers, its affairs had been so conducted, that in sixteen years it was left in such a condition as to be unable to protect itself either against foreign force or domestic disaffection; the minister then sends 40,000 troops to her aid, which she receives with gratitude, till at last Ireland is told that she must incorporate with Great Britain? Would not this be represented as a fraud, to abuse the weakness of Ireland for the destruction of her independence? It was said, indeed, that no force was to be used, that her free consent would be required. This country, however, was to claim the privilege of judging when Ireland was free to judge for herself; she was to be considered as mad and intoxicated till she acceded to the proposition which we resolve is necessary for her interests. In principle, this was the same as the conduct of France, so much reprobated. It was nothing to say that it was for the good of Ireland, if that good was thrust upon her by compulsion. Intimidation of every kind was used to effect the object. Every placeman who dared to vote according to his own judgment, was deprived of his place. When such motives were addressed to men's minds, to induce them to submit to the views of the minister, it was a mockery to say that no corruption and intimidation were used. An hon. gentleman took offence at the supposition of a mercenary support; but without ascribing motives to the conduct of members of parliament, it

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so happened, that many of those who joined the minister for the support of the war, had got their job, their place, or pension.—In reply to what was said of the mischievous consequences of retracting the pledge given to the Catholics in Ireland, allusion had been made to the confessions of the conspirators in that country, and of a person in particular, described as his friend, and a reference to the testimonies at Maidstone. He had seen many attempts made out of doors, to implicate those who gave evidence at Maidstone in the guilt of Mr. O'Connor. Had those, who are supposed to influence the ministerial press, been distinguished by the least candour, they would have drawn a quite different inference from that occurrence from that which they had laboured to enforce. It was evident from the very paper, a connexion with which was the guilt imputed to Mr. O'Connor at Maidstone, that the persons who gave evidence to his character, were those least likely to favour the designs of France, and who had the least to expect, had their projects succeeded. It proved, that there was one spirit and one feeling in the country to resist the attempts of the enemy. Such was the comment which that event naturally suggested; but a quite different construction had been studiously given to it. He should confine himself to the evidence he himself had given on O'Connor's trial. He did not retract that evidence, and he called upon a learned gentleman who had been present at the trial, to point out any inconsistency in his conduct. He knew that Mr. O'Connor always spoke in strong terms of any interference of foreign force in the affairs of England, and his mind seemed so much impressed with the superior grievances of Ireland, that he would not admit that, on the comparison, England had any cause whatever to complain. He might have differed from Mr. O'Connor respecting the remedy that was to be applied to the situation of Ireland; but upon that point he was not called upon to say any thing. Mr. O'Connor never had made him his confidant. He knew too well his opinion respecting foreign interference, to give any reason to suppose, that it was a thing which O'Connor could encourage.—With respect to the provocation of Ireland to pursue any particular mode of resistance, he should say nothing; it was enough to say, that he never could permit Ireland to be seized on as a post from which this country could be attacked.—To return to the subject then: To the fatal policy which dictated the recall of earl Fitzwilliam, was to be attributed the calamities by which Ireland had been distracted. Those who advised that fatal step were responsible for its consequences. The retraction of that concession which earl Fitzwilliam was authorized to support, had prepared the Catholics for the share they had taken in the late disturbances. Ministers had been challenged by the noble earl to deny that he went over with conciliation to the Catholics as a leading object of his policy. It was said, that the emancipation of the Catholics was not the object of the conspiration; but could it be denied that the discontent of the Catholics was the instrument by which the conspirators promoted their own purposes?

The *Solicitor General* said, that the hon. gentleman seemed to labour under a mistake as to the nature of the case at Maidstone. Certainly, if the jury had known that Mr. O'Connor was the traitor he confessed himself to be, they would have found him guilty. There was no such distinction as the hon. gentlemen had reasoned upon. Every Irishman was in the eye of law an Englishman, and *vice versa*; nor would the nature of the crime of treason be in any degree affected to which ever of the two countries a person under trial belonged. With respect to the argument respecting the final adjustment of 1782, he thought it to be chiefly a dispute about words. From the nature of the transaction it could not be complete and final; and at the time, there was a general belief that it would be followed up by something farther. This was particularly stated in the Manchester petition at the time of the commercial propositions.

Mr. *Perceval* said:—The hon. gentleman professes not to understand what we on this side of the House can gain by talking of the final adjustment. He will, however, recollect, that it did not come from us. The hon. gentleman himself brought it forward: he quoted the Journals in opposition to the measure, and accused us of acting contrary to our engagements with the Irish parliament. If the hon. gentleman thinks that nothing is gained by refuting an argument of his own, I am indeed willing to admit that nothing was gained by this discussion on the final adjustment; but he should also

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recollect, that this was his chief argument. Another point, I think, is to be gained by it, which is, that those who were favourable to that measure are pledged to this, or something of the same kind, as it was admitted at the time that something in addition to that measure was then necessary to be done. In applying this to the present case, we contend that the necessity of adopting this farther remedy is more urgent at present.—An hon. gentleman has brought forward an address voted by the Irish House of Commons, which he conceived to be unanswerable. I do not, however, agree in this. His majesty requires by a message to know what are the grievances of which Ireland complains. They state that they require an independent legislature. Upon this being granted to them, they say that their constitutional grievances are at an end; but they do not mean that there may be no imperial grievances. If there was so great a majority in the Irish House of Commons on the address in which the passage which he has quoted occurs, it is rather extraordinary that in the following year there should be so great a majority requiring a renunciation on the part of Great Britain of her power. It is absurd to say, that the one was final and conclusive, while immediately afterwards they require something more final and more conclusive. Perhaps we may be inclined to infer from this proceeding that the first impression which the parliament of Ireland entertain upon a subject is not always the most lasting, but that they sometimes change their opinions.—The hon. gentleman adverts to the time when this measure is brought forward, and says, "the period when you have chosen to propose this union, is, when you can most insult the parliament of Ireland by it; you bring it forward when they cannot reject it. Yet one of the arguments of the hon. gentleman is, that they will reject it. Such, he says, is the force in Ireland, that the parliament of that country cannot enter on the discussion of the subject with any degree of freedom. "You have," he says, "40,000 men in arms in that country;" but it is not to any effect of this body of men in overawing the parliament of Ireland that he objects, but he says, by withdrawing this force you would expose them to the danger of ruin. Thus, by withdrawing the advantages which they enjoy from the connexion with Great Britain, from the danger to which Ireland is exposed from a foreign enemy, and from the general security and benefit which they derive from Great Britain, you leave them no liberty of choice nor option. The result of this argument is, that if you can multiply the advantages which Ireland enjoys from her relation to England, you destroy their free judgment; and the inference is therefore, that you should wait for a time when Ireland shall reap less advantages, and when she can examine the merits and demerits of the measure in a more unbiassed manner. The hon. gentleman deprecates the discussion of the measure as a means of irritating the minds of the Irish people. I am sorry that throughout the whole of the debate, he has not attended to this circumstance. If he had, he would not have employed the similies which he has done, nor would he have asserted, that the conduct of this country towards Ireland was like that of France towards Switzerland. It has been asked, what can be gained by the discussion of the measure in this House after it has been rejected in Ireland? It is impossible, however, with justice to those in Ireland who have come forward in favour of it, to abandon it here. One of the arguments against the union was, that it would be a violation of the pledge of independence which had been formerly given. Why then, if the House does not give government an opportunity of recording its sentiments, this imputation may continue for ever: in fact, no such idea exists; there is no intention of compelling or coercing the parliament of Ireland, but of submitting to their free opinion what is for the advantage of their country. Another benefit is to be derived from the discussion of the measure in this House, which is, that the objections against the competence of parliament to the discussion may be examined. However these arguments may have been urged on the other side of the water, there is not a man in this House who has distinctly asserted that parliament is incompetent to the discussion. The hon. gentleman who deprecated the discussion, but who entered on it, and who left it to be refuted by the other side, was most desirous that it should be understood that he did not support the proposition. It would be in vain to go into an argument on a subject on which no advocate has been found to assert it as his own opinion. It is possible that a very considerable effect may be produced in Ireland by the

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discussion of this subject, when it is seen that this objection which is considered as most strong in Ireland, has not found above three or four advocates here; that the parliament of England, as jealous of the rights of the people as that of Ireland, has suffered the discussion to go on without objections—a discussion which is absolutely indispensable, and which if it were not now to take place, it would be impossible ever again to bring forward.

Mr. *Sheridan* did not deny the competence of the English parliament to accept the surrender, but of the Irish parliament to make it.

Mr. *Sylvester Douglas* said, he should not have risen at present, had it not been for what had just fallen from Mr. Sheridan, and which was a repetition of a doctrine the same gentleman had advanced in a former debate when he had contended, that the English parliament, in 1706, might have a right to accept the surrender of the legislative dominion of Scotland, and yet the Scotch parliament have been incompetent to surrender its authority to that of the greater country; and from thence he had argued, that the reasoning by which on one side of the House it had been maintained, that if the competency of the Irish parliament was denied, it would follow, that the union with Scotland was illegal, the present and all other British parliaments usurpers, and every act of parliament since that time a nullity, was fallacious and ill-founded: but that the point now was, not whether the British parliament could receive, but whether the Irish parliament had any right to make the sort of surrender proposed, to Great Britain. In this view of the subject, it was important that the House should be apprized of the opinions in Ireland on this point. He would state to the House some particulars on the subject. He had undoubtedly read various addresses and resolutions of certain public meetings in Ireland, in which this doctrine of the incompetency of that parliament was asserted; the names of those who had come to those resolutions did not appear, but several of them had been communicated to two distinguished persons in that country, Mr. Foster, and sir John Parnell: but having read, with great attention, the several answers of those gentlemen, he had been happy to observe, that they had avoided any thing which could in the most distant manner be construed into an adoption or sanction of that doctrine. But he had met with two positive and explicit declarations against the competency of the Irish parliament, personally made by two men also of great celebrity in that country, and indeed, he believed over all Europe; the one, Mr. Lewins, now the accredited ambassador from the fraternity of united Irishmen to the French republic; the other Dr. M'Nevin, late one of the Irish directory. That fraternity had, from its first institution in 1791, been alarmed at the idea that a union between the kingdoms might defeat their projects. In 1795, at a meeting held in Dublin, where those persons, and others of the same sort, had defamed the character of the Irish Catholics by assuming that description, when many of them, were, in truth, atheists, the apprehension of a union being then strong in their minds,—Mr. Lewins declared his opinion of the incompetency of the parliament to such a measure, in the following terms: "Who shall dare to assert that the parliament of Ireland can do this? No man but an enemy to both countries: a traitor to the king and the people." Dr. M'Nevin, the ex-director, in the same assembly had in a loftier style, expressed himself thus: "Parliament is incompetent to such an act of national suicide. Can the creature of the people, with parricidal arm, destroy the author of its existence? The attempt would be high treason against the nation, and put it out of the protection of society." He quoted these words from what had been printed as "The authentic Statement of the Proceedings of a Meeting held in Francis-street Chapel, 9th April, 1795." He would now state, who were such enemies to both countries, traitors to the king and the people, parricides who were not entitled to the protection of society. The persons, among others, on whom those loyal subjects, the ambassador Lewins, and the director M'Nevin, had passed this judgment, were a great majority of that estate of the Irish parliament, whose exclusive privilege and function it is, in the last resort, to expound and declare the law of the land; and, in that majority were to be found the four heads of the jurisprudence and supreme tribunals of the kingdom,—lord Clare; the high chancellor of Ireland, whose great talents were acknowledged by all men: lord Yelverton, the lord chief baron, eminent for his learning and patriotism,

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one of the fathers of Irish legislative independency, insomuch that the material statute of that country relative to it is known by his name, but who had made no scruple to declare, that it was in his view and his wishes in 1782, that the transactions of that day might lead to the happy measure of a union; the chief justice of the Common Pleas, lord Carleton, a man not less remarkable for legal knowledge and abilities than for integrity of character, and mild and amiable manners; and lastly, lord Kilwarden chief justice of the King's-bench, whose virtues, understanding, skill, and experience, in the science and practice of the law, would reflect honour on the bench of any country. Of these four persons, all had voted for the measure: and the three first had delived solemn and elaborate opinions in support of it. As the hon. gentleman had seemed desirous that the House should attend to the sentiments of men on the other side of the water, he hoped he had gratified him, by placing those for and those against the competency of the Irish parliament opposed to each other in battle array before their eyes.

Dr. *Laurence* began by observing, that the speech of his hon. and learned friend (Mr. Perceval) must, in his opinion, have convinced every impartial hearer, that the minds of those who supported the measure were by no means in a temper to go calmly and dispassionately into the consideration of so important and delicate a question. It had consisted in great part of personal attack, and some of it totally unconnected with the subject of debate. He should indeed think an apology necessary, if he were to undertake answering all the topics which had been so introduced; but he could not agree that any would be necessary for discussing, at whatever length, a subject that so deserved and demanded the most ample discussion. On the importance of the question, there was no difference of opinion. It was admitted by all, that the connexion of the two countries was essential to the prosperity and safety of the British empire. But the hon. and learned gentleman, and others who had spoken on the same side, seemed to him to have insisted, a little fallaciously, on the benefits which Ireland derived from the connexion; as if she were not equally as necessary to Great Britain, as Great Britain to her. If such a notion could at any time prevail, this certainly was not the time. We should look seriously at our situation in Europe. Shut out from all communication with the continent, from the Douro to the Elbe, by the too successful arms of the enemy; threatened to be excluded from Portugal; having no access beyond the narrow line of coast which forms that kingdom; possessing, with the single exception of Gibraltar (now, in effect, an insulated rock), no friendly port on all the left shore of the Mediterranean, nearer than the dominions of the king of Naples; we had now, at this critical period of the war, been unable for months, through the inclemencies of the season, to send even a common message to any of the northern potentates, upon whom, at this moment, the fate of the whole civilized world so much depended. One side alone was open for the passage of our fleets; and on that side lay Ireland. Let us figure to ourselves that island as a separate state, the rival of our commerce, even if she should remain at peace with us. But that would not be possible. No: if Ireland were once severed from the British empire, nothing but war between the two countries could ensue, inexpiable war, till one or the other were finally subjugated; and in such a war Ireland must inevitably seek the alliance and protection of those powers which are most hostile to Great Britain. What then, if that enemy, which has so repeatedly sworn our destruction, should, by arms, or by arts still more formidable, get possession of that outwork on our most vulnerable flank? Our domestic security would be most directly menaced. We must fight for our altars and our firesides, under circumstances of peril hitherto never felt, never imagined. Nothing therefore is given, which is expended for the preservation of the sister kingdom. It is laid out in the most œconomical manner for our own preservation. For our own sakes we do, what justice no less than liberality forbids us to place on the debtor side of the account against Ireland. Too great sacrifices could hardly be made to engage her confidence, conciliate her warm affections, and excite her active zeal in the common cause. Too much care could not be taken, not to alarm her jealousy, not to make an ostentatious display of the benefits which we confer, not to offend her honest pride and laudable prejudices.

On these grounds of policy it was, that the measure had been principally com-

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bated. No man on the same side of the House with himself, had asserted, that no sort of union could be desirable under any circumstances; no man, as far as he recollected, had gone the length of contending, that even the proposed scheme of union might not, under some possible circumstances, if it were freely offered, be fairly accepted by this country, whatever dangers might arise from it to our own trade and our own constitution. They were not called upon by the argument to go any such length. Much less were they bound to trace out any system of internal policy, from which they would promise the tranquillity and happiness of that miserable country, in its present condition; especially as they could not superintend the execution of that which they might advise, and the success of their counsels would depend on men who would have an interest of reputation in their failure.

It had been constantly assumed on the other side of the House, that a union with Ireland would strengthen and consolidate the empire; and we had been told (a topic which had been used centuries since on similar occasions), that all the great states of Europe have gradually grown up to be what they are, from the union of many smaller dominions. This was undoubtedly true; but it was true likewise, as in former instances it had been remarked, that many princes, on the other hand, value themselves on the multitude of their separate titles. In truth, few monarchs are to be found who do not wield more than one scepter. The crown is often surmounted with the coronet; and there is not a sovereign in the north, who is not, like the king of Great Britain, a member also of the Germanic body. In all periods of political society, mighty kingdoms, which once were separate, had been united in every possible manner, under every possible compact; some, which were once united, had been again separated; and they had alike flourished and decayed indifferently in one or the other mode of existence. This union, however, we were given to understand, is wished by the ministers of our allies. Of what allies? Was the present measure suggested by the cabinet of Berlin? Was it the want of this consolidation to the British empire, that kept the king of Prussia in a no less ruinous than inglorious inactivity? It could not be. That prince himself possessed various territories, which were subject to very different forms of government, some without assemblies of the states. Did baron Thugut wait to know the result of the present discussion here, before he would venture to advise a more decisive tone in the negotiations at Radstadt? The Emperor certainly could not be that ally who had called for the present measure. Not to mention what that sovereign had lost in the Netherlands, nor what he had acquired as well as lost in Italy, he could not from his experience of the emulous zeal which his Hungarian and Bohemian subjects had displayed in the maintenance of his just quarrel, and the defence of his Austrian capital, have thought it indispensable, that every distinct portion of a great empire should be incorporated under one sole legislature. If Austria and Prussia were willing once more to take the field, in concert with Great Britain, against the common enemy, he did not believe, that the chancellor of the exchequer would insist, as a preliminary, that all the countries belonging to the two crowns should be respectively consolidated into one uniform system; neither, if the overtures of Mr. Grenville were likely to be accepted, did he fear one embarrassing question on the subject of the union with Ireland.

But of what nature is our actual connexion with Ireland? Is there no sort of union between the sister kingdoms? There is; not of the crowns only, but of the entire executive governments. It is not only, that the king of Great Britain becomes at once by his accession here, and without any other title, king of Ireland; but every instrument emanating from royal authority in that kingdom, must be verified by the great seal of this; every act, which the king of Ireland does, can only be done by the advice of the British ministers. For that advice they are responsible not to the Irish, but to the British parliament, in which they sit, with which they are in immediate contact; of which they are individually a part; for which, consequently, they must feel much greater deference and much greater awe. Would they then be likely to prefer the counsels of the Irish, to those of the British parliament? Was even the legislation of the sister kingdom absolutely free and independent? In speaking of the legislature, we were too apt, and even the ministers of the crown were as apt as any, to point only to the two branches of the Lords and Commons. The trunk of the

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British oak—but he begged pardon of the House: he was just on the brink of a most wicked metaphor. Had he not corrected himself in time, he was afraid he might have found a very unpleasant union against himself in that House; he was afraid, that a censure upon him might have been moved by an hon. gentleman near him, and supported by the right hon. gentleman opposite to him. He should content himself therefore with saying, in the plainer and safer language of the law, that the king was the head, the beginning, and the end of parliament: he convoked the two Houses to treat and advise, to do and consent; under him they were assembled and held their sessions; by him they were prorogued and dissolved. It was he who enacted, by their advice and consent. They were his supreme national council, and they were no more. But whatever bills might come recommended from Ireland, they could receive their operative sanction only from the king's pleasure, signified under the great seal of this kingdom. Not a single law injurious to the general weal of the empire, or the local interests of Great Britain, could pass the legislature of Ireland without the agency of the British ministers, who for that, no less than for any other of their counsels, might be brought to answer before the tribunal of the British Peers, on the impeachment of the British Commons. On the other hand, there was no measure, executive or legislative, that could hold out the prospect of advantage to the empire at large, to the local interests of Great Britain, or even to the internal peace and prosperity of Ireland, which the king could not propose, with all the weight of his royal recommendation, to his Irish parliament; and on that, as on every other prerogative of the crown, exercised through the agency of the British ministers, either House of the British parliament possessed a right which, in the debates of the last session, during the absence of the right hon. gentleman, had been fully recognized—to interpose their humble advice and representations. Nevertheless that important right had, some how or other, been unaccountably overlooked by the right hon. gentleman, although there never was so strong, there never could be a stronger, practical assertion of that right than was made by himself in the present call upon the House, not only to resolve, but to carry up to the king a whole set of resolutions, declaring it to be fit and advisable,—that his majesty should, in that shape, again propose from the Irish throne, what had been already expunged from the answer to the first communication.

With such a control in our hands, what was there in the relation of the two kingdoms, each to the other, which could make it necessary to extinguish the legislature of the lesser? In a mighty empire, which enjoyed the blessing of a free constitution pervading the whole, where two independent parliaments existed, that which was the more illustrious and exalted in character, in authority, and in jurisdiction, he should have expected, would have felt it to be its peculiar duty, to cultivate, protect and foster in the other, whatever could be there discovered of the true parliamentary spirit? And what was that spirit? A zealous attachment of each and of all to their own proper constitution, a conscious sense of their own dignity, a reverence for themselves, a vehement and a jealous love of independence. He had indulged the persuasion, that the House of Lords in Ireland had judged truly of the British character, when in 1782 they conceived (and the Irish Commons too made a similar declaration), "that the proceedings of that country, founded as they were in right, and supported by constitutional liberty, must have excited the approbation and esteem of the British nation." Nor would he now anticipate so very different a result, as a vote, that it would be adviseable to put an end to those two Houses, in consequence of those very proceedings. Is any man who hears me (demanded Dr. L.) such a novice in public affairs, as not to know how efficacious an instrument in the government of any country is a popular assembly in the hands of an able statesman? What is the foundation of our power? That we can grant to the sovereign more liberal supplies with the good will of the subject, than despotic princes can with safety venture to extort from those who murmur, where they cannot resist; that while to us it belongs to give the money of our constituents, we possess, in that privilege, the best and happiest means of insuring a peaceable redress of their grievances; that drawing after us public opinion, we can lend a new impulse, which no other force can impart, to the arm of government. When I am told, that a political engine of such a description ought at once to be destroyed, there must be strong evidence

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indeed to convince me, that the real fault is not in those who have undertaken, but want the skill, to manage and direct its operations. The danger of a disagreement between the two parliaments on the great questions of war and peace, on alliances and treaties, had been emphatically pressed. Yet, seriously, where was the practical danger? That no such disagreement ever had actually existed, was admitted in the same breath. And what was our experience on that subject? Was it of sixteen or seventeen years only, from the year 1782? No; but of centuries; from the day that a parliament first sat in Ireland. In these respects, the adjustment of 1782 made no alteration. And was there any apparent reason now, for the first time, to apprehend any such danger? Had any such alarm been expressed by any of the foreign statesmen, to whose opinions we were taught to look? If Ireland should think this, or any other war unjust and unnecessary, which Great Britain might think just and necessary, would our exertions be much crippled by the loss of the supplies, which she might in such an event refuse to furnish? Should we offer a subsidy to any foreign prince, would he hesitate till he was assured, that Ireland had consented to guarantee the payment? Has the ratification of any one alliance ever been delayed a single hour to inquire, whether the king of Great Britain could answer for its being approved by the king of Ireland? If France would, if Spain, if the Batavian, if the Cisalpine, if the Roman, if the Ligurian republic, could make peace with this country, did the right hon. gentleman believe that the most insignificant of them all was likely to express the slightest anxiety, lest Ireland might withhold her sanction, and pour forth her fleets and her armies, in a new war, insatiable of vengeance or of glory?

Well, but, it is said, the parliament of Ireland has been factious. If it were meant that differences of opinion had arisen there; certainly so. He knew not why parliaments existed at all, but for the purpose of that discussion, which springs from a difference of opinion. Was it the objection, that sometimes those discussions kindled into a heat, perhaps a little, and not dishonourably, characteristic of the nation? Such ebullitions were often seen on the surface of generous minds, and lively imaginations. Or was the charge levelled against the principle of a systematic opposition to government? On the existence of such parties did the security of free states in a great measure depend. The only question was, did they according to their honest judgment, pursue the interests, and maintain the cause of their country? Now disregarding the cry with which one party, whenever it has the advantage, will attempt to hunt down another, let us coolly reflect, what has been the conduct of the opposition in the Irish parliament. How far have they been factious, especially in the dangerous crisis of these latter times? We have the most unexceptionable testimony at the period, when the first society of United Irishmen was founded at Belfast. In the confidential letter, which developed the first rudiments of the plot for the separation of the two kingdoms, the arch-conspirator Tone pronounces the opposition "not to be sincere friends to the popular cause;" and he particularly declares himself to be sure, that Mr. Grattan would hesitate very much at the resolutions, which he then sent, dressed up as attractively as he could for plausible pretexts to catch the people. Nor was he deceived. Mr. Grattan acted so as, in a great measure, to baffle the conspiracy. He suffered many popular questions to drop, which he had before countenanced, but which, however expedient he might believe them to be in times of tranquillity, he thought of hazardous experiment in a moment, when all the holdings and fastenings of civil society were loosened. One thing above all others was made the subject of much intemperate clamour against him. It was a proposal for a modification of tithes. But when he saw how soon the destruction of all property followed in France from the first dilapidation of the property of the church, he silently declined to agitate the subject again. And now what had we witnessed? That very scheme brought forward as a leading recommendation of the Union, in a pamphlet to which frequent allusions had been made, and which had been repeatedly attributed without denial to a confidential friend of the chancellor of the exchequer. Such was the picture of the Irish opposition before the war: when that new theme was afforded them, how did they then display their faction? A noble lord had informed the House the other night. Mr. Grattan was the first to oppose a motion for papers to inquire into the justice and necessity of the war. In fact, he and his friends supported the

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government during that session; and, at the end of it, were on that account denounced by citizen Simon Butler to a traiterous assembly, which met at Edinburgh, under the title of the British Convention. The ruin of liberty, as it was called, and the persecution of the United Irishmen, were ascribed to an infamous coalition of Mr. Grattan and his connexions with the ministry, and to the satisfaction of the Catholics in the concessions which had then recently been made to them. Ministers themselves (the fact, Dr. L. said, was within his own knowledge) warmly praised the conduct of Mr. Grattan, when he was called over to this country on the appointment of earl Fitzwilliam. Without office he took the lead in supporting the measures of that noble lord in Ireland; and while address upon address came pouring in from every quarter of the kingdom to the lord lieutenant, there was hardly one which did not distinctly extol his choice of public advisers. Yet soon afterwards, a revolution was hazarded in the government (for he could give no less a name to the sudden and angry recall of a chief governor, who had been sent to be the author of a new system), for the sake of proscribing for ever those whom the people loved, in favour of those over whose presumed downfall all ranks and classes had rejoiced. Dr. L. declared, that he did not agree in sentiment with every thing which Mr. Grattan had said and done, since that fatal period; but if that gentleman, goaded by injuries, insulted by the triumph of his enemies, excluded for ever from power by one avenue, traduced in his public character with all the arts of misrepresentation, had shown a little too much anxiety to court again that sort of popularity, from which he had formerly with more dignity and wisdom withdrawn himself, he only afforded one instance among many others, that great minds are not always superior to human infirmities. What, however, was the result in parliament? for that was the present consideration. After a feeble struggle of two years, they followed the example which had been set them in this kingdom; they seceded. That was a step in his opinion, which must be left between them and their constituents, their country, and their consciences. He would only say, that however justifiable it might be in other times, yet the present was a time of such portentous peril, that he could under no circumstances have reconciled to himself what appeared to him such a dereliction of public duty. But whether they were right or wrong, there indisputably ended the history of faction in the Irish parliament. For nearly two years past, there had been nothing that wore the appearance of a formed opposition in either of those two Houses. If there had been any faction, it was rather to be found in another quarter; in a personal attack which had been made on the character of Mr. Grattan, in a publication which purported to be from the highest authority of that kingdom. The noble reporter was at the head of the law, and was generally allowed to be well acquainted with the law. He must have known, therefore, that, hearsay was no proof to put the meanest individual on his defence, in the most trifling cause that could involve his property or his good name. What then ought he to have judged of hearsay, contradicted upon oath by the very person who was vouched to have originally said it? Nor did it rest there. One of the two only witnesses who mensions Mr. Grattan, assigns to his visit a date when it could probably be shown that Mr. Grattan was in this metropolis; the other speaks of two visits with two persons who for a month previous to the time, had been (and the noble reporter could not have been ignorant that they had been) prisoners in the custody of government. Some excuse might be offered for this, if the whole of the evidence had been printed at full length, as it was taken. Secret committees, for obvious reasons, must ever exercise a discretion of reporting in detail, or compressing, and if they will, more or less suppressing the information which they obtain. In fact, the report to which he alluded, was an example of both modes; but it was singular, that the examination of the first and principal witness against Mr. Grattan, was given in short heads and broken sentences down to the very close, when the subject of his visit at Tinnehinch was resumed, as if it were the most interesting point of his testimony, and that subject alone ostentatiously displayed in solemn form of question and answer. It was no less singular, that the principal crime which seems there to be insinuated against Mr. Grattan, is that of having upon his table a printed constitution of the united Irishmen which the preceding year had been published to the whole world by the Irish House of Commons. It was not quite so singular, but it was the strongest condemnation of

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his conduct, that in the other House, the secretary of the lord lieutenant reporting extracts from the information of that very same witness, and reporting them from that very examination before the committee of the Lords, passes over with manly liberality those ill-founded suggestions against an illustrious individual, in contemptuous silence. Had they, where it was thought proper to report them, been attended by any comment to point out their futility, the proceeding would have been generous; had they been shaped into any specific charge, which could have been fairly met, it would have been open and honest: but they were left vague and undefined to furnish matter for libels in newspapers and pamphlets, which could neither be noticed with dignity nor disregarded with safety. In our present situation, all men whose talents, and the influence of whose name could serve their country, should rather be conciliated than irritated. He had entered therefore a little more largely than he should have otherwise done into this last topic; especially, because something of the spirit which he disapproved, seemed to him to mingle itself in the references which had been made that night to the state trials at Maidstone. The argument, however would remain the same, whatever might be the personal guilt or the personal merit of Mr. Grattan and his friends, out of parliament. In their public capacities, they could be accused of no faction, except that which Nero indeed adjudged to be high treason in Thrasea—that of secession from the senate; but that he presumed could never be thought a ground for passing sentence on the senate itself.

One solitary instance had been adduced to show the danger of Irish independence, in a proceeding which more immediately affected the whole body of the parliament. This was the joint address of the two Houses to the prince of Wales, in 1789, "requesting him to take upon himself the government during the continuance of his majesty's indisposition, and as prince regent of Ireland, to exercise and administer in the name and on the behalf of his majesty, all regal powers, jurisdiction, and prerogatives, according to the laws and constitution of that kingdom." But if this reason was so irresistible, why had it slept in silence for ten complete years? Never had a blacker cloud hung over the British empire than in that calamitous hour. He had ever acknowledged th signal favour of Providence, by which we had been delivered from the dangers that then surrounded us. But he must explicitly declare that, in his opinion, the greatest of all our dangers arose from the insufficiency of the power which that House had entrusted to the prince regent. Such a representation of monarchy is always in its own nature comparatively weak, and studiously lowered and enfeebled as it was, that which was projected in 1789, could with difficulty have encountered the shock of the doctrines which soon after burst over Europe from the French revolution. Yet, admitting what that House had done to be right, it did not follow that the parliament of Ireland was not in the right also. The motives which had prevailed here, bore no application to the sister kingdom. It was from a professed regard to the person of the monarch, that limitations were here put upon the representative of his authority. But Ireland had no such distinction to make. She had only to provide for the effectual execution of the regal office. Nay, had the regency here been made what it was, without any such inducement, still, on all general principles of government, accommodated to the relative situation of the two kingdoms, as members of the same empire, he contended, that Ireland had acted wisely. Without meaning to convey any opinion whether the degree of power and influence which the crown possessed in either of the two countries, was precisely that which was best for the public weal, yet he considered it as incontrovertible, that it ought to be comparatively greater in the subordinate kingdom. Ministers, at least, must concur in that position. How else could they explain the resistance which had long been given in that country to a place bill, and a pension bill on the model of Mr. Burke's economical and parliamentary reform. Why else was the pension list allowed by consent of all parties, to remain so much larger in proportion there than here? Why else were the placemen proportionably so much more numerous in that parliament than in our's? Ministers, at least, must confess therefore, that on general principles Ireland was right in conferring more power and influence on the regent, than was thought necessary in Great Britain. But suppose her to have been wrong; was there any thing in that state of the two

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countries which endangered the connexion? Was there any thing which tended (for so it has been confidently argued) to a separation? Quite the reverse. The true crime of the Irish parliament was, that it too much strengthened, in the hands of the heir apparent, then unhappily the immediate representative of his royal father, that power, and that influence of the crown and government, which formed the main links of connexion between the two kingdoms.

He then adverted to a point, which he considered as having been made too prominent in the debate, that of the adjustment in 1782. It had that night been represented, as having been introduced, by the other side of the House, merely to show, that there was nothing in that proceeding to prevent Ireland from agreeing at present, if she pleased, to a union. But surely, no authority could be necessary to prove, that if Ireland was then declared to be independent, she could do what might be done by any other independent country. A question, therefore, had been pertinently put, why then introduce it at all? He had been told, that, it had been first quoted by an hon. gentleman (Mr. Sheridan) who sat near him. It was true; but how had he applied it? Only to argue, as he had conclusively argued, that with one final adjustment recorded upon our Journals, we should not proceed to make a second final adjustment, at least, till it had been demonstrated, wherein and wherefore the former had failed. But on a subsequent day the resolutions of 1782 had been again brought forward by the right hon. gentleman, who endeavoured to deduce from them, that in the contemplation of their author, a new system of connexion had then become necessary, which should be a complete substitute for the old. Different meanings had been put on the principal resolution in question, by himself and by others who had more immediate sources of information; but in this, all agreed, that nothing was designed in any degree approaching to the present measure. In truth, no information was necessary beyond the very words of the resolutions. It was impossible that any man could have said in one sentence, "It is right you should be independent," and in the next, "it is now adviseable that you should surrender your independence again." Whatever further arrangements were then in view, and perhaps they were never very distinctly conceived in all their parts, thus much at least is evident, that they could only have been such as were consistent with the independence that had just been recognized. If, then, there were any persons who thought those arrangements so explained to be sufficient, they must think the proposed union unnecessary; and, on the contrary, it must be maintained on the other side, that if those farther arrangements had taken place still there would have been an equal necessity now for the union. The same too was the case with the commercial propositions of the right hon. gentleman himself. Indeed, he seemed aware of this, and had been obliged to allow that his own plan of 1785 was imperfect. The chancellor of the exchequer denying this, and correcting Dr. Laurence across the table, the latter continued, that he was willing to take the right hon. gentleman's own words. He had not allowed then, that his plan was imperfect, he had only allowed that perhaps nothing better could be said of it, than that it went as far as circumstances would permit. For his own part, he had been taught to consider what stopped short of perfection as imperfect. Then, however, the right hon. gentleman felt, and obeyed the force of circumstances. Then they were unfavourable to the absolute perfection of a union. Were they now more favourable? He then prudently abandoned a favourite measure, because it had been carried in the Irish House of Commons only by the small majority of nineteen; he now, as imprudently persisted in a favourite measure, after a majority of that same House, and among them, three to one of the county members had rejected the bare mention of it as a subject for their consideration.

The late rebellion had been touched upon by most, and assumed by some as a clear and irrefragable reason for the question. Yet if he might borrow a figure, which the right hon. gentleman seemed desirous of monopolizing for the use of himself and his friends, he should say, that it was impossible they could seriously rely upon that event as any reason at all in their favour; and he would freely inform them why he should say so. Ministers had made a little omission in the king's message. They had forgot to communicate the evidence respecting those machinations of the enemy, and the

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traitorous conspiracy in the sister-kingdom, which were to be the ground-work of our proceedings. So the next day down came a second message, and the secretary of state, laden with a huge green bag full of papers; though into that bag the House had never been suffered to peep. A committee indeed had been appointed to examine the contents, but no report had yet been made, or even announced. That evidence when it hereafter should appear, might prove of the gravest kind; but if upon that ministers really meant to found what they had now to propose, they would hardly place the House in the preposterous situation of first voting the measure, and then sitting down with all solemnity to inquire into the grounds of it, unless they imagined there was some peculiar aptitude in such a course of proceeding on Irish affairs.

Having gone through the principal arguments which had been advanced to prove the urgency of the measure, he next proceeded to consider those which might rather be referred to the head of expediency. It had been said, that it would change for the better the manners, habits, and dispositions of the common people. It might have a tendency to do so: but that would be done by industry, and the gradual diffusion of wealth, from whatever source those happy means of civilization might take their origin: and all agreed that the rapid progress of the sister kingdom, in trade, in manufactures, in agriculture, and their concomitant opulence, within the last twenty years, down to the breaking out of the late disastrous rebellion, had been unexampled in the history of that island, and perhaps only exceeded in Great Britain. The work had been auspiciously advancing? nothing however would accomplish the entire civilization of that country, in a day, or in a year: that desirable event could only be produced by the slow operation of many years, perhaps more than one century: and long before the most sanguine admirers of a union could expect any such propitious result from it, all the urgency of the present moment must have been one way or other terminated. The second of these arguments was closely connected with the first. It was drawn from a consideration, of the benefits which would accrue to the empire, and especially the improvement of our common resources, from the new vigour which would be given to Irish labour and skill by the communication of British capital. But before he could fairly estimate that consideration, he must wait till the sixth resolution had, like the commercial propositions of 1785 received the last hand of the master. He had also himself the other night, submitted some doubts to the House, whether, in an imperial point of view, a transfer of British capital into the commerce of Ireland, would be a consummation devoutly to be wished. He should not repeat or enforce the hints which he then threw out; he should only remark, that he did not remember them to have been met with any distinct answer.

The remaining motive, which had been intimated rather than declared to be a great and leading object of the proposed measure, seemed in a manner to have been addressed personally to himself, by the chancellor of the exchequer, and it would certainly have much weight with him if it were solid. A union, it was said, would tend to facilitate the ultimate removal of all political disabilities on account of religion, and, "the Catholics would at once feel a mitigation of the most goading and irritating of their present causes of complaint." The Catholics, then, had goading and irritating causes of complaint. That admission, he trusted, would be remembered, if ever a direct discussion of the late rebellion should come before the House. In the mean time, a question had been put to the other side of the House which appeared to him to require a more satisfactory solution than any which he had yet heard: if the removal of all subsisting disabilities on the score of religion "would provide an effectual remedy for the distractions which had unhappily prevailed in Ireland, and would put an end to those causes which have endangered, and still endanger, her security," why should not her tranquillity be the boon of her own independent legislature? In the present state of things, and while Ireland remained a separate kingdom, it had been asserted, that full concessions to the Catholics would shake her constitution to the centre. The Protestant parliament of Ireland must be sufficiently alive to a sense of that danger, if it really existed. Had the majority of either House ever shown a sincere and incurable alarm on that account? We should look at the conduct of men in a series of their actions, if we wished to know their undisguised sentiments and principles. In 1792, it was

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certain that the petition of the Catholics for some comparatively small favours, though great to them in their then political situation, was rejected with contumely by the Irish House of Commons, and the leaders of that cabal which has too long governed Ireland, exerting all their private and public influence, succeeded in spreading anew the long-forgotten cry of danger to the Protestant ascendancy, which they hoped to convert to the support of their own power. Yet, what ensued? At the commencement of the next session, on the recommendation of the king, advised by his British ministers, the Irish parliament, without a struggle, conceded to the Catholics much more than they had ventured to ask the preceding year, and by that politic liberality, as he had already shown from indubitable testimony, defeated and crushed for the time the treasons of the united Irishmen. Had those concessions been indeed carried into effect, in the true spirit of grace and conciliation, happy would it probably have been for the British empire. But in the very moment of making the grant, the most unmeasured invectives were uttered, by men who were at the head of his majesty's counsels in that kingdom, and by their retainers, and in the execution of that which was benevolently intended for their relief, sufficiently goading and irritating causes of fresh complaint were furnished to the Catholics. In this state of things earl Fitzwilliam was appointed lord lieutenant; and he was decidedly of opinion, that not only in sound policy, but in strict justice on the part of Great Britain, the work which had been left imperfect in 1793 ought to be completed. This opinion was no secret: and how was it received there? At different periods, before and after his dismissal, addresses were emulously presented to him from every quarter, from corporations of every kind, and all known descriptions of men, more perhaps than had ever been sent to any former lord lieutenant; and while all generally approved his short administration, there were few that did not expressly augur every good from his intentions towards the Catholics. As to the Protestant church, the lord primate himself took a part in modelling the proposed measure: the college of Dublin considered it as peculiarly their duty to express to the lord lieutenant, "their strong and lively sense of the important benefits which had resulted from his wisdom and integrity." The assembled synod of Protestant dissenters in Ulster discerned in his declarations "a spirit of generous and distributive policy, commensurate with the wants of a nation so peculiarly circumstanced for more than a century; and looked forward with confidence to the accomplishment of measures calculated to cement a general union, and establish the empire of the laws on its best and surest foundation—the affections and confidence of the people." In the country, among the lower classes disturbances and outrages ceased: the price of land, if any variation could be perceived in so short period, was on the increase: public confidence began to revive. In parliament reigned a harmony, almost an unanimity, without precedent, The largest supplies which had ever been known, were granted with cheerful promptitude. Can it then be surmised —will the right hon. gentleman himself aver that if Earl Fitzwilliam had been suffered to proceed in conciliating the Catholics, he would have found any obstinate repugnance in parliament? But before any positive step had been taken, he was suddenly recalled.

An hon. gentleman (Mr. Sheridan) had read a passage of a printed letter from earl Fitzwilliam to a noble friend, complimenting it with the title of an official document. It certainly had no pretensions to that name; neither was it written for the press: it was solely meant for private circulation among his friends, from some of whom he had learned, and particularly from the noble earl to whom it was addressed, that representations of his conduct had here been whispered much to his prejudice. There was actually, in the original letter, a positive prohibition against printing it, which, of course, was omitted in the first surreptitious edition. At the same time, Dr. Laurence wished it to be understood, that he did not mean, on behalf of earl Fitzwilliam, to retract a single syllable of the matter contained in those letters: no, they were substantively true; though the style, probably, would have been of a different kind, had the noble earl thought it decorous to make any such appeal to the public. Hitherto the facts to be found in those letters had been undisputed. That night, for the first time, something with the sound of a contradiction had been attempted. It had been affirmed, that lord Fitzwilliam had never been required to retract what he had been authorized to promise. It was

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true: he was recalled; and to the moment of his recall, lord Fitzwilliam says, that no decisive resolution was taken by ministers, as to the measure of concession to the Catholics. It had also been affirmed, that he never had been instructed to bring forward the measure. That also was true. He consented, lord Fitzwilliam says in the letter, not to bring the question forward on the part of government, but rather to endeavour to keep it back till a season of more general tranquillity; but from a universal concurrence of the cabinet in the principle, it was at the same time resolved, that if the question should be forced upon him, he was to give it the support of government. — Dr. Laurence then requested, that, with the indulgence of the House, he might read from the noble earl a short but satisfactory narrative of all which preceded his departure for Dublin:—"When the coalition of 1794 was formed," says lord Fitzwilliam, "the duke of Portland accepted office for two distinct purposes:—The first, to give to the then existing administration every possible support, and to partake with them in the responsibility of resisting, by every means, the French system. The second purpose was, to save Ireland from the dangers that threatened it from bad government, and especially to take the management of it into his own hands. Among the measures which his grace considered as essential to that great object, was, the removing all jealousies between the different religions, by removing all partial restrictions from the Roman Catholics, by what is usually called Catholic Emancipation.—I was the person to take the government of Ireland on the part of the duke of Portland. The various difficulties which presently arose to impede that arrangement need not be detailed: they were, however notorious; but finally they were got over. Afterwards, on the subject of measures, fresh difficulties were started, and particularly to the Catholic emancipation. The numberless pressures and embarrassments of the times, made a leading objection against engaging in a measure which might add one more to the number. The result of the discussion was, that I was not to bring the question forward, I making, at the same time, the most distinct declaration, that if it was brought forward from any other quarter, I would give it my full support. This matter so understood, I went to Ireland."—With this understanding, why was he permitted ever to take upon himself that government? Why, more especially, when it was well known what counsellors he would take into his confidence, and as well known what would infallibly be expected from him and from them by the Catholics? No sooner had he arrived there, than he found it impossible to avoid the public discussion of the question. He found that all jealousies between different descriptions of the Catholics were healed, and that the whole body would join in asking what remained, though they had been divided on occasion of the former concessions. He gave early notice of all this to ministers here. But without receiving from hence any other instructions than a desire of farther information, such as might justify the cabinet in assenting to the immediate demand, he was recalled; not, in truth, for his countenance of the Catholic claims, but (as he had always insisted) to retain in office two or three unpopular individuals, who, from the beginning, were known not to have possessed his confidence. At any rate, his recall was never ascribed to the apprehension of any difficulty in parliament, from his avowed support of the Catholics; there was no appearance of such difficulty in any quarter; and no lord lieutenant ever brought back with him from that shore such cordial effusions of veneration and affection, both from the parliament and the people.

The House had been repeatedly urged at least to go into the committee, that the outline of the whole plan might be recorded, to justify the intentions of government, and remove jealousies which had been rashly conceived in the sister kingdom. Now, that it was which he most deprecated, that, when there was no prospect of the measure being carried in Ireland, there should be recorded on the Journals of parliament here, any determination whatsoever on the subject. It could produce no possible good; it would probably occasion much mischief. Could a word, a syllable, a letter, be found in any part of the intended Resolutions, that might be reasonably expected to conciliate any one class or description of the Irish nation? A most respectable majority of the House of Commons had refused to hear of surrendering their independent existence: would it conciliate them to vote it fit and advisable that they should be destroyed, and to desire that his majesty would tell them so? The Catholics

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wished to have all remaining disabilities removed, the chief of which was, their exclusion from parliament: would it conciliate them to stipulate for the continuance of that exclusion, by continuing the old oath of supremacy, and the declaration against transubstantiation? Would they be quite easy under this stipulation, from observing that it was to remain in force only until the united parliament should otherwise provide; when they should find in the authoritative explanation of the Resolutions, published to the world, not in a newspaper report, but in a kind of half-official form, that all is to be left in studied ambiguity; that the right hon. gentleman declines "to anticipate the discussion, and even the propriety of agitating the question at all, or saying how soon or how late it may be fit to discuss it?" On the other hand, could even that little opening for the future admission of the Catholic claims, be supposed much to gratify the violent Orange party, and High Protestant-ascendancy-men? A general cry had been endeavoured to be spread among all ranks, that British influence was the source of all Irish calamity: would the country be disabused and quieted, by being told from Great Britain that they ought to be governed in future by a legislature, in effect British? The great body of the peasantry, for the most part both of native Irish-birth and Papists, felt an old antipathy to the name of *Sassena*; it signifies at once English settler and Protestant; it sounds to their ears as conqueror and spoiler, persecutor and heretic; and too great reason had they for much of their horror at the sound. Would they be delighted when it should be interpreted to them, that the name was from henceforth to become their own? Was there any thing in the whole conception of the measure which could soften, and in time gradually wear away, their inveterate prejudices? Were the two nations, as in the Union with Scotland, to assume a new name, indifferent alike to both? Were we together to form, as he had supposed it naturally would have been, the United Kingdom of the Britannic Isles? No; but perhaps, in compliment to an Irish figure of speech, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. If the latter Resolutions were examined, with regard to commerce and finance, what was there to satisfy any man in Ireland, that the final modification of the details would leave him any security on either of these heads. The Speaker here observing, that it was not regular to go into the specific Resolutions, as they were not before the House, Dr. L. said, he was aware of the irregularity, but it was difficult not to allude to them, when so much had been said on the other side, of the happy consequences to be derived from these parts of the proposed adjustment. This he only offered in apology, and should dismiss the topic.

On the other hand, the mischiefs of keeping this question still suspended over the heads of the Irish nation, was no matter of speculation, but of melancholy experience. Since the Resolutions had been opened, what intelligence had arrived? The administration of justice, for the present, had ceased; there was a sort of civil rebellion in the profession of the law, which, on occasion of the late armed rebellion, had set an illustrious example of loyalty, zeal, energy, and perseverance, to the whole yeomanry of the kingdom. In parliament, impeachments had been mentioned on one side, and on the other a very indiscreet menace had been thrown forth, of removing the session to Cork. The dismissals had been confirmed, and others had followed for the same offence, of too much attachment to the constitution of Ireland. A new opposition must in consequence be formed from those who were most devoted to government, while not a single man would be gained from the adverse ranks. But the most striking fact was, the use which had been made of the right hon. gentleman's speech on his majesty's message. All knew, from the late Reports of the Irish Lords and Commons, and they who had attended to the progress of the conspiracy had before known, the fertility and audacity of the seditious and treasonable libellers in that country, far beyond all competition of the most criminal productions that have issued from our own press. But all their Jacobin emissaries and agitators had for the present suspended their labours. They, whom the right hon. gentleman had truly described as cunning in mischief, had judged his speech more inflammatory, more injurious to the cause of Great Britain, more favourable to their own views of discontent, confusion, and separation, than any thing which their inventions could supply, and were at that moment busy in spreading its fame as widely as the author could desire. What had been the effect of the sequel, which ushered in the

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Resolutions, and of the plan itself, as far as it was there contained, had not hitherto reached us; but for his own part, he was afraid that many of the arguments, both from immediate necessity and permanent expediency, would tend to fix a lasting impression on the minds of the Irish nation, that it was become the unalterable policy of the present ministry, sooner or later, in some way or other, by persuasion, intrigue, or intimidation, to lead, to inveigle, or to compel them, into a union with Great Britain. Would it not then, at least, be the extreme of rashness, without any one public object, to precipitate a decision, under the present circumstances of the two countries, before any intelligence had arrived of the temper and feeling with which the first developement of the measure itself had been received?

But there was one evil, above all others, of a magnitude that filled him with alarm, and which must ever spring from the unadvised agitation of such a question: it directly pushed men upon inquiries into the competence of parliaments, under the constitution of these realms, and the abstract rights of the people under the fundamental laws of civil society. This consequence followed, even from the proposal of a union with Scotland, among a more sober-minded people, and in a less speculative age. The present times were marked with a propensity to such dangerous theories. That itch was the first symptom of the epidemic that raged throughout Europe. It had become a running sore, into which all the foul humours of the body discharged themselves. What physician, then, of sound judgment, would venture, without the greatest precaution, on a prescription that must produce a new derivation to the diseased part; and how was it less imprudent for a statesman, in an hour of heat and inflammation, to create a new occasion for discussions, with which untutored minds could not safely be trusted in their coolest moments? Assemblies of a very different kind from public meetings of counties, cities, and towns, could not touch on these subjects, but at the risk of other points being mooted, no less important than delicate; and the doctrines which had been advanced on the other side of the House, against the sovereignty of the people, had drawn on, with some who stood on the same side with himself, a controversy concerning the principles of that Revolution on which depended his majesty's title to his crown. For my own part, declared Dr. L., I have no hesitation in saying, that I will ever maintain the legal competence of the legislature, as possessing the supreme collective power of the state, to do whatever it may conscientiously think most conducive to the general good of the whole. I cannot distinguish in principle between our right to sanction, as we often have done, a treaty of peace, which should cede the smallest island in the West Indies, without consulting not only the local legislature, but every individual planter, and the people of Great Britain, who have all an interest in every inch of his majesty's dominions, as well as of this island, and our right to surrender our independence, if I could for an instant suppose, which God forbid, that such were the exigency of our situation: neither can I see why we should not do, to better our situation, whatever we might do to avoid a greater evil. Not meaning to bind myself to every word, or every phrase, I do generally agree also with those on the other side of the House, in their understanding of our own Revolution; but I choose rather to draw my notions of that glorious and happy event, from the fountain-head of authority:—Our great deliverer, king William himself, with the assistance of lord Somers and his other ministers, recorded the motives and principles of his own actions. It was in a memorial designed to have been presented at Ryswick; but Europe required from him no such explanation. It remains, however, a venerable document for the instruction of posterity. On what, then, did the illustrious actors in the Revolution expressly ground the justification of all which they had done? On the sovereignty of the people? No; but on the nature of our limited monarchy, under the peculiar constitution and laws of this kingdom. It was the proximity of William to the throne, they observed, which was the cause of his interposing—but for what end? That alone of "endeavouring to bring things back to their ancient channel." It was James's desertion of the kingdom, and his having recourse to a foreign and hostile power, that made it necessary for his subjects to see to their own safety, "which," it is added, "they did, by continuing the ancient government, with no other interruption than what their present circumstances made unavoidable." But the whole subject is summed up by those truly-wise statesmen,

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in a masterly style, every word of which, in these days of wild doctrines, should be engraven on the hearts of Englishmen. It seems as if they had, with a divine spirit, foreseen the sophistries of later times, and wished thus to enter their eternal protest against them. "Nothing," say they, "was done in the progress of the whole Revolution but that which the late king made inevitable by some act or other of his own. It went not upon false suggestions, nor barely upon the pretences of redressing particular grievances, or some doubtful oppressions, much less on the ambitious designs of his majesty, that are so often, and so maliciously, represented as the true causes of the Revolution. It was the late king's openly throwing off the restraints of law, and his setting about a total subversion of the constitution, that drove the nation to extreme courses. The oaths of allegiance can be understood only in the sense limited by law, and so they cannot be conceived to bind subjects to a king, who would not govern them any longer, unless he might be allowed to do it against law. A revolution, so brought about, carries in it no precedent against the security of government, or the peace of mankind. That which an absolute necessity enforced at one time, can be no warrant for irregular proceedings at any other time, unless it be where the like necessity shall require the like remedies."

This Sir, is my political creed with regard to the revolution, and this consecrated text speaks more forcibly home to my conviction than the most subtle and elegant comment. Fearing to lose myself in metaphysical refinements, I shall ever content myself with holding fast this simplicity of the ancient faith. Yet, fixed as are my opinions on these points, I cannot, with my hon. and learned friend, rejoice that they have found their way into these debates. Unfortunately, the practical argument for the competence of parliament, which he so much admires, and which is drawn from the union with Scotland, and all that has been done under it, has no solid foundation in fact. The parliament which surrendered the independence of that kingdom was expressly summoned to treat, to consult upon, to conclude a union with England. Neither can I share his exultation in the probable weight which our decision will have in favour of our own competency. They who give judgment in their own cause in behalf of their own rights, are always liable to suspicion: they must seldom, indeed, hope to satisfy those who think their own rights invaded by the sentence. My right hon. friend who spoke last, treated with much more pleasantry than I can venture to follow, the high authorities which had denied our competency. If we believe him, they are no more than the confessed traitors, Dr. M'Nevin, and the diplomatic Mr. Lewins, envoy from the united Irishmen to the French republic; and to them he opposes the Speaker, and the late chancellor of the exchequer in Ireland. He forgets, however, the addresses to which Mr. Foster and sir John Parnell answered. In them, and in too many other similar addresses which I have seen, the competency of parliament is distinctly and strenuously denied, and it is, Sir, by authorities such as those, that I am most concerned to find such doctrines recognized; by popular meetings, which judging, as all large assemblies ever must, from feeling rather than from reason, propagate eagerly what they have hastily adopted, and quickly communicate their opinions and their passions to all within the wide sphere of their influence.

He then passed to the mode of proceeding on the present occasion. He wished that in this, as in all other respects, we should look back to the wisdom of our ancestors: for he thought, that by deviating from their track, we had wandered into a course by which we could never arrive at the goal. In every similar instance of old, the business had been prepared and matured by commissioners on one side and the other, men of name for rank, for talents and for integrity, who while they came to the arduous work with a serious disposition to remove all obstacles, yet saw the eyes of their country upon them, and felt the full obligation of the duty which they had to discharge. These met and conferred—they discussed their mutual objections with temper, and they sought, not the triumph of debate, but equitable accommodation. It was thus, that before the accomplishment of a union with Scotland, the measure was three times under treaty, and three times failed. But in every treaty the commissioners made some new advance, and on every rupture parted without irritation and animosity. It was thus, too, that the farther arrangements, whatever they were, which were intended in 1782, were to have been primarily settled and adjusted. But in what manner was this proceeding con-

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ducted. The projeet of a union was ushered into the world by a pamphlet, to the author of which (Mr. Cooke) if ministers did not advise his majesty to show some signal mark of his displeasure, he should always think that they had been culpably negligent in their duty; for never had he seen a publication so profligate in its principle and so desperate in its policy. It was profligate in principle because it aimed to intimidate all parties, to cajole all parties, to divide and distract the country by setting up one local interest against another, and to disgust every man in Ireland with the whole frame of the constitution, and the whole system of the government under which he lived; desperate in policy, because if the measure which it meant to recommend, should ultimately fail, there could not arise any faction, that would not in that record, find admissions of all that for years had been made the subject of popular clamour. The parliament is there represented as formed, in its very essence, for the exclusion of the Catholics from the state, as containing very little actual or virtual representation of the Protestant Dissenters, who are nearly two-thirds of the Protestants of that kingdom, and as being in practice, little more than a market for the abilities of lawyers. The clergy are reverently described as so sensible to the interests of the church, that they may safely be left to their usual discernment. The administration of justice is libelled by the decent insinuation that the bench and the bar need a new infusion of learning from our courts. It is allowed, that the government has been a uniform system of state partiality, that is, of oppression, against the Catholics, who are comforted, however, with the hope of final relief from a united parliament, but which the Protestants are assured, in the very next sentence, will never repeal the laws that stand in the way of that relief. It is hinted to the former, with all possible good faith, that if the union should not pass, they may be stript of all the favours which have recently been granted to them; and the latter are plainly told, that if they do not support the union, there is nothing to prevent government from making up matters with the Catholics, which it was just before said, would be no less than a total overthrow of the constitution. And for all the miseries and injuries of the sister kingdom, which have been so liberally admitted, Great Britain is made responsible, and a dreadful responsibility it is before the world and God. In the British cabinet, it is said, are the Irish councils framed; by a British lord lieutenant is the patronage of the crown distributed, in the manner that we all know; and to British influence is the Irish parliament subject. He did not himself believe that charge against ministers. If he were to be their accuser, his crimination of them would be of an opposite kind; it would rather be for abdicating the government of Ireland. While the flame which this firebrand had kindled, was still burning, parliament assembled. Who then could wonder at the fate which the attempt to introduce the measure there, experienced? Grant, nevertheless, that it had been suffered to be opened in detail, such a negotiation could never be successfully begun and brought to an issue by two parliaments. Such public bodies could not approach each other; could not search amicably together to find facilities and compromises; could not discuss the several points, each within its own bosom, without the probability of much internal violence and acrimony: there was hardly a forcible or a brilliant expression, that conld be employed in one, to lend energy or beauty to an argument or a declamation, which might not be perverted to scatter discord in the other. To court popular favour in each country, what is adverse must be in a great degree concealed, and that which seemed to be all bounty, must come back again clogged with conditions, the more unpalatable, as they were unexpected. It was thus that the commercial propositions of 1785 fell to the ground. After they were returned amended from this country, the minister of that never dared to show them in the Irish House of Commons which had originally past them. He brought in a bill, which he professed to be founded on their old resolutions, and even that he was compelled to abandon. In a treaty so managed, where, at every successive stage, the hopes and wishes of a nation were excited with a certainty of being disappointed, there would always be an appearance of duplicity. He was convinced it never would succeed in any great question involved in detail. If he were the warmest friend to the measure, he would entreat the right hon. gentleman to stop where he was, and to propose that the House should simply declare and signify to his majesty, that they were willing to nominate commissioners whenever

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Ireland would do the same, for the purpose of consulting on the terms of a union between the sister kingdoms.

The secretary of state the other night had paid him a very flattering attention, for which he should have made his immediate acknowledgments, had he not been prevented by the rising of an hon. gentleman (Mr. Sheridan) from whom the House would always receive much more entertainment and instruction than from himself. To convince his scepticism, as it was called, the right hon. secretary had not only shown the present prosperity of Scotland, by a bundle of papers which every man heard with pleasure, and no man was inclined to deny; but he also, recollecting perhaps one of the strongest arguments against a worse kind of scepticism, edified the House by a complete dissertation on the greater and the lesser prophets. At the same time, Dr. L. said, he trusted that the House would not expect him to follow that right hon. gentleman through all the prophecies, from the melancholy, but happily baseless visions of lord Belhaven, and the clearer second sight of Mr. Seaton, up to the perfection of inspiration in a speech from the throne. It did not require a nice examination of lord Belhaven's beautiful oratory to satisfy him, that on such a subject there might be much splendid eloquence, where there was little solid wisdom; and he much doubted whether the prediction which had been quoted with so much applause, from one of the then English commissioners, was really any prediction at all, or indeed any thing more than a bad argument and unjust pretence. He could not contend in such erudition against the national advantages of the right hon. secretary; only he must take leave to declare, that he still thought he had acted candidly in setting off the argument drawn from the prosperity of Scotland since the Union, and that his scepticism as to the cause was in no degree removed by the bare statement, conclusive as it had been to the fact. The right hon gentleman might as well take credit for the benefits which Great Britain had enjoyed from the American war, because since that event her commerce had been doubled. —Into the other purpose to which the union with Scotland had been applied, he must enter a little more at large, for a misapprehension in the particular to which he alluded might beget incalculable evil. He had, on a former occasion, cautioned the House against risking the consequences of pressing forward a union, even if it could be carried by a small majority in parliament, against the general wishes of the people, and in the face of a powerful, enterprizing and desperate enemy. With this view, he pointed to the dangers which had followed in Scotland, even amidst the victories of Marlborough's glorious campaigns on the continent, and he contrasted our successes then, with our situation now;—a situation though not of despondence, yet certainly not of exultation, nor yet even of established security. The right hon. secretary then, in a friendly manner, signified his dissent across the House, and he had paid the deference which he owed to such an authority, especially on the History of the North. What therefore was his surprise, on recurring to that history, to find himself more than confirmed in all which he had advanced? And he conjectured that the right hon. gentleman had made the same discovery, for he had shifted his ground. He had said, that the union must be referred to the commencement of the treaty in 1702, and then the allies were unsuccessful. The period of that commencement, however, had nothing to do (Dr. L. observed) with his view of the subject. But in truth the treaty of 1702 was undertaken before the British army had reached the continent, and soon after the allies had opened the first campaign with the capture of several towns and forts. That treaty totally failed; and new circumstances, under a new administration, gave rise to the more fortunate negotiation of 1705, the first overture to which had been voted in the House, after the decisive battle of Blenheim, and at the very moment when they had before them the Queen's message, desiring their concurrence in bestowing some signal and permanent reward on the duke of Marlborough. We must not delude ourselves with the hope, that because the union with Scotland succeeded against much popular clamour, we might now, with a certainty of a like happy issue, disregard the discontents of the Irish nation. There was hardly any thing common to the two measures except the name. Did the same necessity exist? No. He had before described the actual connexion of Great Britain and Ireland. Was there any such connexion between the independent kingdoms of England and Scotland? Nothing like it. The two crowns were joined by distinct titles. The acts of the Scottish

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parliament did not receive their validity from the great seal of England, deliberately put or withheld by the advice of ministers resident and responsible here, but from the touch of the Scottish sceptre, in the hands of the royal commissioner, a Scottish, not an English nobleman. For centuries, the two nations had waged cruel wars: for centuries England had never sent forth her armies to combat her foreign enemies, but her borders were wasted by the incursions of her northern neighbours. This afflicted island had seen half a million of her children perish by mutual slaughter. There appeared no option but a union, or a renewal of those horrible scenes, probably with increased animosity and fury. The two countries seemed to stand on the slippery brink of a bloody gulf. The parliament of Scotland had refused to recognise the succession of his majesty's illustrious house, unless their commercial grievances were previously redressed. The parliament of England had equipped a fleet to cruize against the trade of Scotland. But when had Ireland threatened us with invasion? When had she struck at our domestic security? When had she not largely recruited our armies and our navies from her population? Where had we conquered, that she had not fought and bled by our side? At what period of their history were the parliaments of the sister-kingdom so adversely committed? Had not the parliament of Ireland repeatedly bound the nation to stand or fall with the fortunes of Great Britain? And far from kindling, had not that parliament just extinguished a civil war? Sensible of her natural inferiority in strength and all resources, except her courage, Scotland had always willingly entertained the proposal of union, whenever there was an opening for it in the accidental circumstances of the two kingdoms. But when was the notion of a union ever started in Ireland, that it did not raise an immediate ferment? Whenever a new lord lieutenant was to be rendered obnoxious, was it not the hackneyed artifice of faction to propagate the rumour of such a project? The trade of Scotland was nearly annihilated, by what must be allowed to have been the illiberal jealousy of England: she had much to gain, and little to lose. Ireland was thriving fast: she had much to lose by this doubtful experiment. Let us now look more closely into the treaty of 1706. At what period did it become unpopular? Not till it had been some days under the consideration of parliament. Was it universally unpopular? By no means. The convention of burghs directly instructed by the burgesses, was nearly divided, but (setting aside the capital) the minority which was for the union paid much the larger share to the public contributions, and contained much the more numerous population. Several addresses in favour of the articles were signed, but kept back by the prudence of ministers, who wished not to agitate and distract the people. Much laudable grief was excited in the populace, by invitations to them to take a last view of the scepter that gave them laws, and the other ensigns of royal authority, which, since the person of the sovereign had been withdrawn from them, were regarded by them with fond veneration. Their consciences also were surprised and ensnared. Some were alarmed for the fate of their presbytery, in a parliament where only sixteen Scottish peers were opposed to twenty-six English prelates; and others, more scrupulous, doubted whether they could innocently consent to the establishment of episcopacy, though in another part of the united kingdom. But while the sense of the people at large was thus various, that of their parliament, summoned to consider that very measure, was clear and unequivocal. It was declared not merely by a considerable majority of the whole assembly, but a majority of every separate order in the state; a majority of the nobility, of the barons, of the burghs. On the other hand, what was the history of the present measure in Ireland, where there existed no symbols of royalty to be surrendered, no differenee of church establishment to disquiet the weak minded? It was short, indeed, but it was full. On the first hint of the design, grave merchants and rich bankers, branded it in a public declaration of unqualified resistance; it had been patronized only by a single city, seduced probably by the hope, possibly by the promise, of partial and local advantages; the doors of the House of Commons had been shut against it by a majority, less respectable in numbers than in the names of which it was composed, and the class of representatives by which it was distinguished. Was there any thing common even in the conduct of the business before the parliaments of the different kingdoms? The articles of union with Scotland were first submitted to that parliament which

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was to make the chief sacrifice of constitution: that of England, which was only to accept or refuse, what might be freely offered, was for that purpose kept back by short prorogations to a period which is marked as almost portentously late, in the pure practice subsequent to the revolution; it was kept back to the beginning of December. What is there, then, which can furnish a common inference in any of the circumstances connected with the two unions, that which was happily accomplished in the beginning of this century, and that which has been unhappily attempted in the present year? What rational man, who considers things and not words, could confide, that if a union should be finally carried in the two parliaments, the dissatisfaction of Ireland would be as transitory as that of Scotland? Yet even in Scotland that measure, desired as it often had been, demanded then by great and respectable bodies of people, and passed in a manner so directly binding on all orders of the state, drew after it a peril which, we are told, the hand of Heaven alone singularly averted. Our enemies were employed with all their power and diligence to recruit their troops, and repair their recent disgraces and defeats; "they were beset and embarrassed on every side, and had no leisure to look this way; God," (it is emphatically said), "had tied their hands." Now, in his inscrutable dispensations, he has let the hands of our same enemies loose to scourge the world. They had not yet run their career of injustice and violence; nor was their monstrous force half so terrible as the secret mining of their craft and intrigue. In Ireland, we too well knew, that they had active and bold confederates who went about seeking by every pretence to debauch the multitude; who, under the specious semblance of patriotism, might inflame a cry against union, when they dared not avow that of separation. In such a situation, he rested in a settled conviction, that he could not better discharge his duty to his country, than by resisting the farther progress of a measure, which he did not think in itself essentially necessary; which he did not think produced in a manner that could ever lead to a favourable termination, which had been rejected in that kingdom where it ought to have the free consent of both parliament and people; and which, while it offered only speculations of future and distant benefits, would embitter and spread present animosities, alienate the affections of those who were our most zealous partisans in the sister kingdom; and for a time invite with new encouragement, the almost desperate attempts of foreign enemies and domestic traitors.

The question being put, "That the Speaker do now leave the chair," the House divided:

Tellers.

Yeas	Mr. Ryder - - - -	131
	Mr. Perceval - - -	
Noes	General Fitzpatrick -	19
	Dr. Laurence - - -	

The House then resolved itself into the said committee, when it was moved to report progress, on an understanding that the House would the next day go at once into the committee.

List of the Minority.

Bird, W. W.	Pulteney, sir W.
Cooke, Bryan	Richardson, J.
Combe, alderman	Ridley, sir M. W.
Cavendish lord G.	Sheridan, R. B.
Dundas, hon. C.	St. John. hon, St. A.
Denison, W. J.	Tierney, G.
Grey, C.	Tufton, hon. H.
Jones, T. T.	Wilson, R.
Leicester, sir J.	TELLERS.
Lloyd, J. M.	Fitzpatrick, general
North, D.	Laurence, Dr.

Feb. 12. On the order of the day being read, for going into a committee of the whole House, to consider further of the King's Message,

Sir *John Sinclair* said, he had been desirous of delivering his sentiments respecting the project of a union with Ireland, if it had not been understood that no farther discussion was to take place previous to the Speaker's leaving the chair.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, he was not aware that any such understanding existed. It was true the minister had deprecated any further discussion that might prevent the House from going into the committee. He had indeed paid a singular compliment to both sides of the House, for he had said as much as if from this side of the House nothing like argument was to be expected, and from his own friends nothing that could pass for an answer. He had endeavoured, indeed, to muzzle his majority, but perhaps there might arise a spirit of independent loquacity that would disappoint his anxiety for going into the committee. There were two points, how-

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ever, on which, being misunderstood, he wished to give some explanation. He not only opposed the union, at the present time, but he did not think the union at all necessary; on the contrary, he considered it to be pregnant with danger to the liberties of both countries. It had been said too, that nobody had denied the competency of the Irish parliament to conclude a treaty of union. The fact however was, that from the distinction taken upon this side between the power to make, and the power to accept the contract, it was unnecessary to argue that point. It was his opinion, at the same time, that the Irish parliament had not, and could not, have the right to adopt any measure so important as a union. Of the power he said nothing, but they could have no right. What would have been the feeling of an English parliament, if it had been proposed at any former period to incorporate England with another power? What would have been thought if when Philip 2nd succeeded to the crown of this country, the English had been required to send their parliament to Madrid; or, had prince George of Denmark lived to succeed queen Anne, they had been called upon to send Lords and Commons to Denmark? Would they not have said that they had no right to do such a thing, that it was a measure beyond the intent and object of the trust confided to them? Having already expressed his opinion on the tendency of the measure, it was not his intention to attend the discussion in the committee, but when the Speaker left the chair, he should leave the House. He likewise gave notice, that it was his intention on some future occasion to bring forward a proposition respecting the doing away of the civil disqualifications in Ireland arising from religious distinctions.

Mr. *Martin* said, he should have objected to the Speaker's leaving the chair had he not been convinced that there was no intention to force this measure upon the Irish people. He thought the present was perhaps the only opportunity of saving Ireland. With respect to what was called the final adjustment of 1782, he could not see how that adjustment could at all tie up the two nations from voluntarily coming to some farther agreement by mutual consent. If he conceived any thing like force was intended, he would oppose the question; but he hoped that farther discussion would render the subject better understood.

The House then went into a committee on the Resolutions; Mr. Douglas in the chair.

Mr. *Bankes* contended, that Ireland was not in a condition to coalesce and unite with this country from the state of her religious discords and political feuds. To remove those disorders a union was not the proper way. He rather thought that the Irish parliament was the proper medium through which they should be remedied. The source of them lay not in the government of Ireland, but in the prevalence of English faction and influence. He was supported in this position by the unanimous testimony of all people there. He would appeal to the Catholics, to Dr. M'Nevin: even the United Irishmen themselves joined in that opinion. Throughout that country English faction was execrated. The Catholics of Ireland might hope hereafter to see a reformation in the representation of Parliament, and through that medium looked to a participation of honour and emolument, or, at least, to an alleviation of their burdens; but if the measure of union took place, all those hopes must be cut off, as by the united parliament, the door of redress must ever be shut upon them, especially as a test was one point to be established. The policy with which Ireland had been treated for many years was barbarous and narrow; for three centuries the people had been stationary in civilization. Before Ireland could be tranquil, before she could be brought to a state in which this country could coalesce with her, we should be obliged to alter the system on which we had for some time past shown a disposition to act. We must retrace our steps. He wished those who were for doing away all religious distinctions were present now. It was his fixed opinion that it was necessary to found our policy upon those religious distinctions, instead of totally abandoning them. Yet he believed there was something in the Catholic cause that might be united to the Protestants. Numbers of Catholics were in the yeomanry, militia, and other military corps. He thought a distinction might be made between the Catholics who were loyal, and those who stirred up and fomented rebellion. He thought that instead of a general sweeping overthrow of religious distinctions, a line might be drawn between those who had shown themselves worthy of confidence, and those who had proved themselves inveterate foes; and he thought that those

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who could produce certificates of good conduct might gradually be admitted to share the privileges of the Protestants. He had the authority of the committee of the Irish parliament for stating, that the Roman Catholic priests were the most active instruments of the late rebellion. Notwithstanding the conduct of the French to the pope, and to all religions, particularly the Catholic, these priests were so inveterate in their animosity to British connexion, that they were ready to promote the views of France for its destruction. It was not religion then, but dislike of the English name, by which they were actuated. Such men, therefore, ought not to be suffered to nourish animosity and to perpetuate rebellion. For this, and the other intestine evils by which Ireland was distracted, a union was not the remedy, as it did not go to any internal regulations. He did not attach to the argument of the frail connexion that on the present footing, subsisted between the two countries, that importance which some had given it. Ireland could not, under the present system, neutralize her ports, as had been contended; the prerogative of the executive power to declare peace and war increased the influence of government on the legislature, and afforded no inconsiderable security against any difference between the two countries in political questions of importance. It was to be considered too, that Ireland was unable to stand alone, and for aid she could look only to two powers, France and England. Was it possible, after what she had seen of the conduct of France, that she could expect more security under her auspices, than under the fostering care of Great Britain? The apprehension appeared so groundless, that he should not pursue it farther.—There was another circumstance, however, on which the House should pause before it came to a determination. He had opposed the proposition formerly made for infusing, as it was called, fresh blood into the veins of the constitution, by the addition of new knights chosen from the counties of England. If he was adverse to the admission of men of such a description as they must have been, on account of their numbers, he must be much more hostile to the admission of a still greater number, chosen from among those who constituted the Irish House of Commons. Such an accession would tend only to render the House of Commons tumultuous and disorderly.—Even supposing the measure carried with the unanimous consent of parliament, he could not see its efficiency, or how it could prevent the Catholics from joining the French three months after its adoption, if an opportunity should occur: but the agitation of the question in the present state of the country might be attended with much mischief. It could not diminish the number of enemies, on the contrary, it might make foes of those who were now our friends, and of course could bring no additional force or energy to the common cause.

Mr. Speaker *Addington* rose. He said, that the occasions were few on which he was disposed to take any other part in the debates and proceedings of the House, than that which was called for by his official duty; on the present important question, however, he thought it incumbent upon him to express his opinion by his vote; and exhausted as the subject had been, he hoped for the indulgence of the committee, whilst he stated the grounds upon which that vote would be given. His view of the subject was, indeed, very different from that of his hon. friend, who had declared it to be his opinion, that the situation of Ireland was such as to render it not only inexpedient, but unsafe, to coalesce with her. Now it was upon the situation of that country, at the present moment, that he founded his conviction, not merely of the expediency, for of that he had long been satisfied, but of the urgent and pressing necessity of the measure in question; which, though considered by his hon. friend as in no degree tending to remedy those evils, which were universally acknowledged, he was convinced would, in the first instance, palliate, and ultimately eradicate them; would at once have the effect of allaying irritation and animosity, and ere long, he trusted of extinguishing them for ever.

His hon. friend was also disposed to think, that the legislature of Ireland was fully adequate to the redress of those grievances which require parliamentary interposition, and to the restoration of internal tranquillity. The supposition unfortunately was not warranted by experience: to the redress of some of the grievances complained of, and to the removal of some of the causes of irritation, the Speaker said its adequacy could not be doubted; but there were radical and inherent evils, closely interwoven with the state and condition of Ireland, and with the temper, the

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feelings, and the prejudices of the great body of the people, which, though they were not occasioned by the separation of the two legislatures, he was convinced an incorporation of those legislatures could alone effectually remove. It was a melancholy, but, he feared, an incontrovertible truth, that the state of Ireland had, at no period of its history, with which we are acquainted, been such as to afford satisfaction to any mind, that could justly appreciate the blessings of a well ordered, a flourishing, and a happy condition of civil society. The bounty of Providence had, indeed, been displayed in that country by a fertile soil, and by abundant means of internal improvement and prosperity; its inhabitants had not been less distinguished than those of Great Britain, in corresponding stations of life, for eloquence, for literary and scientific acquirements, and for those talents and exertions which have established the naval and military renown of the British empire. Their form of government was the same as our own, but it wanted its true characteristics; it did not like ours, bestow and receive general confidence and protection: for it was not, like ours, connected by ties, which he trusted were here indissoluble, with the obvious interests, the feelings, and the sentiments of the great body of the people.

The truth was, that, in contemplating the state of Ireland, even at a period of apparent tranquillity, it was impossible not to discover those seeds of animosity, which have unhappily been matured by circumstances into insurrection and rebellion. To account, in a great degree, for this animosity, it might, perhaps, be sufficient to state, that a large majority of the people were Catholics, and that four-fifths of the property was in the hands of Protestants, who are alone legally competent to hold the high offices of state, and to perform the functions of legislation. Hereditary feelings and resentments had, besides, contributed to keep these elements of internal discord in almost constant agitation. The extensive confiscations which took place at the commencement of the last century, when, after the suppression of the rebellion by lord Mountjoy, almost the whole province of Ulster became forfeited to the crown; the creation of numerous boroughs by James 1st; which, in effect, transferred the legislative authority from the Catholics to the Protestants; the Act of Settlement, and explanation: the severities exercised by Cromwell; the event of the battle of the Boyne, and the surrender of Limerick (though the articles of capitulation in the latter instance prove, what was, indeed, manifested by the whole tenour of his conduct, that a spirit of intolerance and persecution made no part of the character of king William); the code of Popery Laws, which, however necessary for the security of persons of one persuasion, must be admitted to have operated with great severity on those of the other: all these circumstances could not fail to recur forcibly to the minds of the Catholics, to keep alive the sensations which they successively excited, and to make them look with irritation at power, when they saw it lodged in the hands of those whom they considered as their oppressors; whose religious opinions they conceived to be heretical, and who were in possession of that property which the Catholics supposed had been unjustly wrested from their ancestors. On the other hand, the horrible excesses to which the vindictive fury and bigotry of the Catholics were carried in 1641; the dreadful use they made of the power, which they acquired upon the usurpation of James 2nd (for the government of James 2nd in Ireland was an usurpation after he had abdicated the throne of England): the forfeitures, the sequestrations, and and the attainders which then took place, had necessarily engendered those sentiments of apprehension and distrust in the Protestants of that country, which occasioned, and appeared to justify, the code of penalties and disabilities which was enacted at the commencement of the present century. Such, he feared, was a true representation of the state and temper of Ireland; and he was convinced that no remedy could be effectual, but such as would strike at the root of the evil, would abate the struggles for power, would remove the impediments to civilization and internal improvement, and by which the Protestant and Catholic inhabitants of the two countries would become one people, under the superintending authority and protection of a united and imperial parliament.

Mr. Speaker then stated, that about the year 1778, a material change of system took place: the extinction of the hopes of the House of Stuart, and the peaceable demeanour of the Roman Catholics, led to a repeal of the penal code, which bore upon them with peculiar hardship; and they obtained from the justice of the

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Irish parliament full security to their property, complete personal liberty, and a perfect toleration of their religion. A wise and liberal policy induced the legislature of this country to relax, at the same period, the strictness of the Act of Navigation, and of our colonial system: and an unqualified participation of the foreign trade of Great Britain was accordingly given to his majesty's subjects in Ireland. Farther concessions, of a political nature, were made in the year 1782. The control of the privy council under what was called Poyning's law, was abolished; and the act of the 6th of George 1st, affirming the power and authority of the king, by and with the consent of the Lords and Commons of Great Britain, to make laws and statutes to bind the kingdom and people of Ireland, was repealed. The independence of the parliament of Ireland was thus fully and completely established, and, in the subsequent year, the appellant jurisdiction of the British House of Peers from the Courts of law in that country was done away. Without calling in question the wisdom or expediency of the measures last described, it would not, he trusted, be thought disrespectful or improper to observe, for the observation was warranted by a resolution of that House, that, however sufficient they might be for the removal of the grievances of which Ireland then complained, they were defective, and incomplete for the purpose of adjusting the relation in which the two countries were thenceforward to stand, as branches of the same empire; that they loosened the ancient ties of connexion, and that they substituted no others in their place. Such a state of things might possibly have subsisted for a time, during a period of tranquillity: but it was ill-suited to bear the agitation of that tempest, which soon convulsed a considerable part of Europe, and extended its malignant and desolating principles to the sister kingdom. For its influence and its ravages it there unfortunately found an ample field: there were wanting in that country (as he had before stated), those links by which the body of the people should be connected with the government: there were not, in the degrge, at least, that could be wished, those ties between the higher and the great mass of the lower orders of the community which are, perhaps, the best security for internal peace and tranquillity. In many parts of the country the non-residence of proprietors, and the intervention of other persons and other interests, obstructed that communication and intercourse between landlord and tenant which were equally advantageous to both, and the community at large. The predominance of numbers, as had been already mentioned, was on the part of the Catholics, that of property on the part of the Protestants. The new philosophy had taught the dreadful lesson that was to be derived from such a disproportion: religious bigotry, for the first time came in aid of principles always formidable, and aggravated the danger arising from the physical strength of numbers, and the new doctrines of the Rights of Man.

With the particulars of the convulsion that had recently taken place, all were too well acquainted. He would not now enter into them, but confine himself to a consideration of the various plans which had been proposed for restoring tranquillity to Ireland, and for perpetuating her connexion with Great Britain. Of these, Catholic emancipation, as it is called; the re-enactment of the popery laws, in the whole, or in part; and an incorporation of the legislature of the two countries had each its separate advocates. The objections to Catholic emancipation, coupled as it was, according to the general opinion of its advocates, with parliamentary reform, were, in the language of Mr. Foster, whose name he could not mention but with sentiments of respect, "that it had the tendency to give the influence to numbers, and take it from property, and to overwhelm the rights of the Protestants of Ireland."

Mr. Speaker acknowledged, that he was anxious for the removal of the most obnoxious grounds of complaint against what was termed the Protestant ascendancy; but he sought for the attainment of this desirable object, by no other means than those of a legislative union: and not at the hazard of those formidable consequences, which Catholic emancipation, with all that belonged to it, was, in his opinion calculated to produce. Indeed, if the Catholics were true to their conscience and their creed, the Protestant establishment must be xposed by such a change to immediate, and, perhaps, inevitable danger; and the state of the Protestants, under such circumstances, be rendered worse than that of the Catholics during any period of the present and preceding century. If actuated by interest and passion (by which he did not suppose

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that they were likely to be more or less influenced than others), they could not be supposed to possess, without exercising it, the power of recovering that property of which they conceived their ancestors to have been wrongfully deprived: and if, under the present circumstances, the inconveniences arising from the discordant proceedings of distinct legislatures have been regarded with anxiety and apprehension, he could not but conceive such sensations would be applicable, in a far stronger degree, if political power was possessed by those, between whom, and the parliament of Great Britain, a greater variety of differences from various causes, might be supposed to arise, and on points less capable of reconciliation and adjustment.

His hon. friend who spoke last thought that it would be expedient for the parliament of Ireland to tread back some of the steps that had been taken, and to re-enact the whole code of the Popery laws (the repeal of which had been the subject of such general encomium and satisfaction) against the Catholics, who did not produce certificates of their peaceable and loyal conduct during the late rebellion: and to provide that those by whom such certificates were produced, should be admitted to all the rights and privileges enjoyed by Protestants; but he had also intimated such an opinion of the Catholics, as to leave little hope that many of them would be entitled to the benefit of such a distinction. That disaffection had spread widely amongst that body, could not, he feared, be contested: that it had been so nearly universal, as some persons had imagined, he thought there were solid grounds to deny. Many individuals of the yeomanry and other volunteer corps, and most of those of whom the militia regiments consisted, were of that persuasion; and yet they had in general manifested the utmost degree of ardour and alacrity in resisting the internal, as well as the foreign enemies of their country. He was, however, concerned to think that, on the part of a large proportion of the Catholics, strong prejudices against this country must be confessed to exist; but he was convinced that they arose in a great degree, from the persuasion that the Protestant ascendancy was principally maintained by British connexion and British power.

He said, that the proceeding which had been recommended by his hon. friend, would, if his advice was followed, appear to imply that the rebellion had been carried on by Catholics only; a supposition which the accounts received from the seat of it, and the characters and confessions of many of the united Irishmen, would effectually disprove. The proposed discrimination would, he was persuaded, if adopted, add fuel to the flame, and create new sources of dissension and hostility. It should, besides, be observed, that many who, from motives of hypocrisy, or of regard to their personal safety, had not given way to the malignant suggestions of their own minds, by taking up arms against the government, would thereby be countenanced; whereas, in other parts, that had been the scene of insurrection and rebellion, the Catholic, who had yielded to a momentary, though an unjustifiable impulse, would, by one rash step, be excluded for ever. This was not a mode, according to his opinion, of healing the divisions, and of establishing the tranquillity of Ireland: it could not have the effect of allaying the irritation of the Catholics, nor of conveying to the Protestants a greater degree of confidence and security.

Mr. Speaker then adverted to the measure of 1793, by which the competency to enjoy and exercise the elective franchise and to hold certain offices, was afforded to the Roman Catholics of Ireland, and to the opinion which had been stated concerning it, from an authority to which he had before referred. "For that measure," Mr. Foster had said, "that he could not thank the Irish minister, though he did for many others; for that from his soul he considered it as the prelude and certain forerunner of the overthrow of the Protestant establishment in Ireland"—"that it hazarded the Hanover succession, and the connexion with Great Britain." From these opinions, he was far from dissenting; he had quoted them, not only to mark the danger which was apprehended from the proceedings of 1793, by a gentleman known to be friendly to the Protestant establishment, and to the connexion with Great Britain, but for the purpose of founding upon them an argument in favour of the measure in question. If the predictions of Mr. Foster were well-founded, and he confessed that they accorded in a great degree with his own sentiments and apprehensions, he saw no means by which their accomplishment could possibly be averted, but by a legislative union, or by a renewal of the restrictions and disabilities which were done away by the act of

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1793. Of the former measure Mr. Foster had very recently disapproved; and it could not therefore but be supposed, that it was by the latter only that he could hope to prevent those calamities which, he was convinced, were deprecated by no one more anxiously and sincerely than by that hon. gentleman himself. He would, however, acknowledge, that if he were obliged to make an option between a recurrence to so much of the system of the Popery laws as was repealed at that time, or to Catholic emancipation, coupled with parliamentary reform, he should conceive that he best consulted the tranquillity of Ireland, and the interests of the empire at large, in giving the preference to the former: but that it was, in a great measure, because his objections to both were radical and insuperable, that he was compelled to give his cordial and entire support to the measue of a legislative union.

He said, it was a satisfaction to him to know that the opinion which he entertained on this subject was sanctioned by great and respectable authorities. It could not be unimportant to the weight and credit of such a measure, to state that it had been countenanced by distinguished and enlightened men in the last century; that it had the approbation of sir Matthew Decker, sir William Petty, and sir Josiah Child; that Molineux, the friend of Locke, who had incurred, as the Journals could testify, the displeasure of that House, for his bold assertion of the independent authority of the parliament of his native country, anxiously wished for its adoption. After having referred in his publication on this subject, to many ancient documents, for the purpose of proving, that, at an early period of our history, delegates from Ireland had been sent to the parliament of Great Britain, Mr. Molineux adds—"If from these records it be concluded that the parliament of England may bind Ireland, it must also be allowed that the people of Ireland ought to have their representatives in the parliament of England; and this I believe we should be willing enough to embrace, but it is a happiness we can hardly hope for." It was also material to state, that in the second year of the reign of queen Anne, when, as had been said, it had become difficult for the Protestants to keep their ground in Ireland, a committee of the House of Lords of that kingdom was appointed to take into consideration the state of the nation: and the committee reported, "That upon due consideration of the present constitution of this kingdom, such a humble representation be made to the queen of the state and condition thereof, as may best incline her majesty, by such proper means as to her majesty shall seem fit, to promote such an union with England as may best qualify the states of this kingdom to be represented there." The proposition was not listened to by the queen's ministers, and, as has been stated by lord Clare, "it was not till this attempt to unite the parliaments of both countries had proved abortive, that the great code of the Popery laws of Ireland was enacted: a code," he admitted, "of great severity, but evidently forced upon the parliament by necessity." To these authorities, and many others might be cited in support of them, he had the utmost satisfaction in adding those of lord Clare, lord Carleton, lord Kilwarden, and particularly of lord Yelverton, who had been called the "Father of the Independence of the Irish Parliament," but whose sentiments at this time were by no means inconsistent with his conduct in 1782; as it was only by the establishment of the independence of the parliament of Ireland, that a legislative union could be the result of the compact between the two countries. Without that measure it must have been an act of power on the part of Great Britain.

To the opinions of these great and enlightened men, who have proved themselves to be the true friends of Great Britain and Ireland, by their constant endeavours to encourage and promote a close and intimate connexion between the two countries, he desired to add those entertained by Dr. M'Nevin and others, of that, which (with reference to their own views and projects) they justly denominated *a fatal* measure. It would be recollected that these persons have declared that, on their parts, Catholic emancipation was a mere pretence, and that separation was the real and invariable object of all their hopes and all their efforts. On the 9th of April 1795, the committee of nine, of which Dr. M'Nevin, Lewins, Ryan, and others of the same description, were members, assembled at the chapel in Francis-street, Dublin, and came to the following, amongst other, resolutions: "Resolved unanimously, That we are sincerely and unalterably attached to the rights, liberties, and independence of our native country; and we pledge ourselves, collectively and

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individually, to resist, even our own emancipation, if proposed to be conceded on the ignominious terms of acquiescence in the fatal measure of a union with the sister kingdom.—That the thanks of this meeting be respectfully presented to our agent, Theobald Wolfe Tone, esq. for the readiness with which he accompanied our deputies to England, and the many other important services he has rendered to the Catholic body, in pursuit of emancipation —services which no gratitude can over-rate and no remuneration can over-pay."

It was not, however, upon authority only, much as he was inclined to respect it, nor upon the repugnance of United Irishmen to this measure, that he was disposed to support and recommend it. He thought that it was calculated to avert much probable evil from both countries, and to produce positive and substantial advantages to both. One of the leading considerations in its favour was, that it would in future preclude the inconvenience and danger, of which recent experience warrants the apprehension, arising from the discordant determinations of separate and independent legislatures. He reminded the committee of the proceedings of the Irish parliament, upon the subject of the commercial propositions in 1785, and the question of the appointment of a regent, which occurred in 1788. In the former, the sensitive jealousy of the parliament of Ireland deprived that country of the obvious and undisputed advantages which were held out to it, by a free access to the home market of Great Britain; in the latter, it would be recollected that the diversity of opinion, which occurred in the two parliaments, led not only to a difference as to the extent of the power and authority, but as to the identity of the person, by whom, during the illness of his majesty, the functions of executive government were to be exercised. The same illustrious personage was indeed nominated by both, but by one as a matter of choice; in virtue of a supposed right by the other: in one with more limited powers; in the other with powers as unlimited as those of the monarch himself. It was therefore obvious that the discordant principles, which operated at that juncture, and which actually occasioned the delegation of different degrees of authority, might also have led to the nomination of different individuals; and this at the hazard of the tranquillity and safety of the empire, and in direct violation of the spirit of the unrepealed statute of Henry 8th, which enacts that "the kingdom of Ireland is inseparably annexed to, and dependent upon, the crown of Great Britain, and that whoever is king of England, is thereby *ipso facto* king of Ireland." Upon every thinking mind a deep impression was made by these transactions; and a very respectable gentleman, who now holds a high office in Ireland, is reported to have said, in a debate at that period—"If these sentiments are to prevail, what shall prevent us to-morrow from adopting a different mutiny-bill, or disclaiming a uniformity in religion? The unity of the executive magistrate has been well called the solitary bond of union; but can it exist for a moment, if a possibility remains of the two legislatures being discordant on this subject? Unless one is suffered to take the lead, the alternative is obvious: with two legislatures so liable to pull different ways, no authority can govern."

His hon. friend who preceded him, appeared, however, to be under little apprehension upon the subject of a possible difference of sentiments and conduct, in the two legislatures. He thought that as the king of Great Britain was the supreme executive magistrate, and therefore vested with the same prerogatives in both countries, it was not to be supposed that those embarrassments and dangers would arise, which might be occasioned by a declared difference of opinion on the subject of treaties, or on the great questions of peace or war. The Speaker said, he knew and respected the prerogatives of the crown, but he likewise knew and respected the privileges of the people. Of these the power of the purse was the most important; it was the great instrument of support and control; the check upon the abuse of power on the part of the advisers of the crown, and the safeguard and guardian of the interests and liberties of the people. It would not be contended that this great privilege was to be borne down by prerogative; and if not, it might, at a period of public emergency, be differently exercised in both countries. In one, supplies might be liberally granted; in the other, absolutely withheld; and the co-operation of the two great branches of the empire could never be ensured, even on occasions in which its security and independence were deeply and essentially involved. The Speaker, however, declared, that his hopes went farther; he thought,

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that if the present measure was carried into effect, it would not only preclude such a discordance as he had described, but that it would lead to a coincidence of views and sentiments in the great body of the people of both kingdoms; that they would all look the same way: and that their feelings and opinions would invariably recognize the same interests, the same allies, and the same enemies.

He must however declare, that no consideration so forcibly impelled him to wish for the adoption of this measure, as his conviction of the beneficial consequences with which it would be attended to the internal situation of Ireland; his hope and belief were, that it would lead to the removal of a principal ground of animosity, by precluding that species of contest, which had hitherto subsisted for obtaining political authority and power. Among the lower orders of society, he was convinced that its salutary effects would be found in that change of manners, the result of habitual industry, which would necessarily be produced by the transfer of a part of the capital of Great Britain to that country. Could it be supposed, he would ask, that persons of opulence would be so much inclined to embark any part of their property from hence in the trade and commerce of Ireland, if the parliament of that country were still to remain distinct from, instead of being incorporated with, that of Great Britain? Of the consequences which must be produced by such an application of part of the wealth of this country, no doubt could be entertained; it would operate on every class of the community, and diffuse itself throughout every part of that kingdom: and notwithstanding what had been said of the aggravation that would be occasioned by a legislative union to the evil arising from the non-residence of the opulent proprietors of land in that country, he was convinced, that whatever had a tendency to give security to property and improvement to manners would prove the fallacy of such a supposition; and that even those wastes and fastnesses, which now afford retreat to the marauder, the assassin, and the rebel, would be the scenes of cheerful labour and protected industry, of mutual confidence and social intercourse, under the superintendance and guardianship of well-administered and beneficent laws.

It had been said, that amongst the consequences of such a measure, it could not be contended that it would be possible to mention any immediate advantage to the Roman Catholics of Ireland: from this assertion, however, he must beg leave to dissent. The elective franchise itself, bestowed by the parliament of Ireland in 1793, could hardly be considered as a boon to the Roman Catholics, whom it was hoped and intended to gratify: the right, with the limitation annexed to it, could not be exercised in most instances, without some degree of violence to their opinions and their feelings: it could only be made use of for the purpose of contributing to form a House of Commons, the whole body of which they too generally conceived to be adverse to their interests, and those of the individuals, to whom, from a coincidence in religious opinions, and from other causes, they had been accustomed to look up with the utmost respect. Whereas the same franchise, if employed in contributing to form the representation in a united parliament, might be accompanied with the satisfactory reflection, that the individual in whose behalf it was exercised, would be mixed with those, a majority of whom were uninfluenced by the prejudices which they have imputed, whether on sufficient ground or otherwise is not now to be considered, to the parliament and to the great body of the Protestants in Ireland.

With respect to the expediency of extending to the Roman Catholics of Great Britain and Ireland, in the event of such a measure as was now in contemplation, a more ample participation of the rights of Protestant subjects, he would not now offer an opinion; he would, however, quote the sentiments of a person (Dr. Duigenan) whose good sense he admired, and who would not be accused of a strong bias towards the Roman Catholics of Ireland: "It has been the opinion of very great and able statesmen, that a union with England, on just and equitable terms, would be very advantageous to Ireland, would contribute greatly to increase her trade and her opulence, and conduce to the strength of the empire at large; and in any event, it could not be more prejudicial to the Romanists of Ireland, than to any other class of his majesty's subjects here, but much less (if it could be at all prejudicial, which I cannot admit), inasmuch, if we were one people with the British nation, the preponderance of the Protestant body of the whole empire would be so great, that all rivalship and

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jealousies between Protestants and Romanists would cease for ever, and it would not be necessary, for the safety of the empire at large, to curb Romanists by any exclusive law whatsoever."

On the supposed surrender of the rights of the parliament of Ireland, and the sacrifice of its independency, he was not disposed to dwell; the futility of the arguments on which those objections were founded, was, in his opinion at least, fully developed on a former occasion: he would only say, that if a uniform coincidence should take place between the two legislatures, the independency of one or the other would be liable to be called in question; and that without such a coincidence the interests of the empire, and eventually the connexion between the two countries, might possibly be endangered.

Mr. Speaker said, he was not inclined to take up the time of the committee by a reference to the particulars of the union with Scotland, to the consequences which followed that measure, or to the arguments which they suggested on the present occasion. These topics had been already discussed, in a manner which could not fail to make a forcible impression on the House. He would only remark, that the animosity between the two nations, immediately previous to the union, was such as to have led them to the verge of hostilities; and that the grounds of distrust and complaint were thereby entirely done away. He also observed, that there were circumstances tending to facilitate an intimate connexion between this country and Ireland, and to incorporate the people of those kingdoms, which did not belong to the relation in which England and Scotland stood to each other. It would be recollected, amongst other illustrations of this observation, that here, and in Ireland, there was the same code of civil and criminal law; the same forms for the administration of justice; and for the purposes of legislation, the same succession to the crown; and the same established religion.

Having stated a few of the many considerations which, in his opinion, recommended this measure, he thought it incumbent upon him to notice some of the objections that had been made to it. Of these there were two, either of which, if valid, was fundamental and insuperable. The first was to the competency of the parliament of Ireland to accede to this measure: the second relied on the final adjustment, as it had been termed, of the year 1782. The one called in question the nature and extent of the authority of the parliament of Ireland; the other solemnly appealed to the good faith of the parliament of Great Britain. In viewing the question of competency, he said, it appeared to him that new doctrines of the present day were on the one side, and the sound principles, the theory and the practice of the British constitution, on the other. The highest legal authorities affirmed the extent and the supremacy of the power of parliament. It was sufficient to refer to the names of sir Edward Coke, sir Matthew Hale, sir William Blackstone, and many others, who, to say the least, have never been charged with a bias against the constitution and liberties of their country. That the functions of the legislature should be exercised on all occasions, and particularly on one so solemn and important as the present, with the utmost circumspection, would be readily and universally allowed. It must also be admitted, that parliament possesses the power, and the right, when called for by the obligation of providing for the public security and welfare, to new-model the constitution, and to alter the succession to the crown, and the established religion of these kingdoms: and he would then ask those to whose objections he was referring, where, if not in parliament, the means of carrying into effect such an arrangement as that which is now in contemplation, however necessary, and however approved, could possibly be supposed to reside? Not in the constituent body, for it would hardly be said that they had delegated a trust to their representatives, with a reservation in particular cases: not in the people at large, for such a supposition would imply the dissolution of the government; as it is an established truth, that, while the constitution exists, the only legitimate sanction of public opinion, and its only efficient authority, must be derived from the proceedings of parliament. "This is the place," sir William Blackstone observes, "where that transcendant and absolute power, which must in all governments reside somewhere is entrusted by the constitution of these kingdoms."

The attempts to preclude the discussion of the present subject, by the denomination of a final adjustment, which had been bestowed on the proceedings of the year 1782, struck him with more astonishment

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than even those which he had read and heard against the sufficiency of parliament itself. If any importance were to be attached to those words, he should have expected to find them solemnly recorded in acts of the respective legislatures, as the basis of the new relation which then took place between the two countries: what, however, was the fact? They are mentioned in a message from the king, and noticed in the addresses of the British parliament, and of the House of Lords in Ireland; but in the address of the House of Commons of that country, these words are not to be found. He observed, that as it had been the practice (and a judicious one it was, where there is a general concurrence of opinion), that the address should accord with the speech or the message from his majesty, the omission was remarkable. All, however, that had been said upon this part of the subject, appeared to him to be a dispute about words: for he was ready to acknowledge, that the British parliament would justly incur the imputation of a gross breach of faith, if they were to aim, either directly or indirectly, at the resumption of the power and supremacy which were then solemnly renounced: that the adjustment, as far as the independency of the Irish parliament was concerned, was really and absolutely final and conclusive; but if the argument, which was meant to be founded on these words, could be expected to avail, it must not only pass over the measure which took place in the subsequent year, and the resolution which immediately succeeded the act for the repeal of the sixth of George 1st, but it must contend that the true import of those words was so binding and peremptory, as to bar the possibility of adopting any ulterior arrangement of the nature of that to which they might be supposed to apply, however called for by the obvious interests, and the wishes of the inhabitants of both countries. Such a proposition could not be maintained, and if not, the argument with which it was necessarily connected, must, in his opinion, fall to the ground.

Mr. Speaker said, that some objections had been urged, the force of which he would by no means deny. He was thoroughly convinced that the House of Commons, as at present constituted, was a true and faithful representative of the people of Great Britain; that there their opinions and their wishes (he did not mean the fluctuating and fleeting impressions of the day, but those which were the result of information and reflection) had their due influence, and were there fully and accurately expressed. He could not, therefore contemplate without anxiety the possible effects of such an alteration as the measure in question would produce. He was not, however, inclined to oppose a conjectural and contingent evil to that which was positive and immediate; or if he did, he must compare one, as cautiously as he could, with the other, and strike the balance. His apprehensions on this subject would be greater, were it not for the experience which has been afforded by the union with Scotland: but the pressing evils, which it was the duty of the House, if possible, to avert, were uppermost in his mind; and he was convinced, that every other remedy which had been suggested was fraught with consequences infinitely more injurious than any of those which even this circumstance, objectionable as he allowed it to be, was capable of producing. Of the danger to the commercial interests of this country, which had been adverted to, but which had not been much insisted upon, he said he entertained no serious apprehension. It was not true that Great Britain would necessarily lose what Ireland would gain. He knew, besides the liberality and the good sense of the merchants and manufacturers of this country, if Ireland should cease to be a separate kingdom, they would not entertain a wish to withhold from her inhabitants a fair and equal participation of the advantages which were enjoyed by themselves; and they were fully aware, that whatever contributed to promote industry and to produce tranquillity, in Ireland, had a tendency to give additional security and stability to the trading interests of Great Britain.

It had been asked, why, if this measure was brought forward with such obvious advantages, the adoption of it had not been sooner recommended? To which it had been justly and forcibly answered, that it should not be wondered at, if those, who are convinced that this close connection between the two countries is essential to the welfare of both, should be particularly solicitous to strengthen and confirm it, when the dissolution of that connexion is the avowed object of the intestine traitors in Ireland, and of the common enemy of the two kingdoms. He was, however, concerned to think, and to acknow-

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ledge, that precautionary wisdom had very little influence on the conduct of individuals, or of nations; an evil must in general have been painfully experienced before measures are taken to remove it, or to guard against its return: the abuses of power led to that establishment of our rights, and that security to our liberties, which took place at the Revolution. The weight of the public debt was becoming, at least in the opinion of many, intolerable to the subjects of this country, before efficacious measures were adopted for its diminution; and it was not until public credit was seriously reduced, and the objections to the plan of raising the supplies of the year, by the ordinary practice of loans, became almost insuperable, that the system of the present session of parliament was adopted; which, however burdensome, was a subject of general approbation, and a source of pride, of satisfaction, and of confidence to a great majority of the people. To this want of promptitude to provide against remote and contingent evils, one exception, indeed, presented itself to his recollection: it was, the measure adopted by the parliament in 1791, which provided, that in case of future loans a farther sum should be borrowed to be applied as a sinking fund, for the purpose of gradually redeeming the addition thereby occasioned to the funded debt. Too much could not be said in commendation of the provident wisdom and justice of that measure, which is constantly employed in diminishing the pressure upon public credit, which arises from an increasing accumulation of the debt contracted since the commencement of the war; and in effecting an entire relief from its burthens perhaps to ourselves, but certainly, and at no distant period, to our descendants.

Some gentlemen had entertained an opinion which, he acknowledged, was entitled to serious attention and consideration; that, as the proposed measure had been discountenanced by the House of Commons in Ireland, to persist in the discussion of it here, would be to add to the irritation which unhappily prevails in that country. Such an effect he should sincerely lament, and should be sorry to have any share in producing. There were other consequences, however, which it was of the utmost importance to avert. If the parliament of this country were to abstain from declaring the conditions upon which it would be disposed to incorporate itself with the parliament of Ireland, it was impossible not to be aware of the opportunity and scope which would be afforded for misconception, suspicion, and misrepresentation. He trusted that we should adopt such resolutions as would rather tend to appease than to inflame: such as would be a pledge of our liberality and our justice: that we should manifest the earnestness and sincerity of our wishes to communicate to Ireland a full participation of all the advantages we enjoy; that we should prove ourselves desirous of considering the inhabitants of the two countries as one people, connected together by the closest ties under the same constitution, the same parliament, and the same king.

He had understood, that, if the resolutions which had been opened should be agreed to, it would be proposed that they should be carried to the foot of the throne, accompanied by an address to his majesty. In that address he hoped, and was persuaded, that no sentiments or expressions would be introduced which jealousy might misinterpret, or malice pervert: that there would be no indication of a wish on our part to press the consideration of it upon the legislature of Ireland; and that no impulse would be given to it, but what it might derive from the free and unbiassed opinions, and dispassionate judgment of the parliament and people of that kingdom. The subject, he was convinced, would makes its way. To Ireland he was satisfied that greater advantages were now held out, than had ever been afforded by any single measure to any country; that it would greatly augment the resources, and place upon a rock that would be impregnable, as far as that term could be applied to any human establishment, the strength and security of the British empire. He would, however, acknowledge that his views and hopes extended still farther, as he was thoroughly persuaded, that whatever had a tendency to consolidate and maintain the power and the independence of these kingdoms, was of the deepest importance to the best and most valuable interests of mankind. From these considerations, he gave the resolution his most cordial support.

The 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th Resolutions were then agreed to. The question being put upon the 6th resolution, which goes to grant an equality of privileges in trade and navigation, &c. to Ireland,

Mr. *Pitt* said, it was the duty of every

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member to attend to the peculiar interests of his constituents; but there was a paramount duty which called upon them still more forcibly to consult the general prosperity of the empire at large. When this subject was duly considered, it would appear that it was indifferent in what part of the empire any given manufacture flourished, especially if it was established in a place where it was most likely to flourish; and he was particularly happy in being able to say that the trade and manufacturers of this country were far from being in such an unprosperous condition as to make the present resolution give the least umbrage to the manufacturers of any great town. The only objection which he thought it liable to was, that it referred to a distant period what ought immediately to result from a complete union.

Mr. *Carew*, when the 7th resolution was proposed, objected to it as not precisely expressing that an identity of taxation should take place between the two countries.

Mr. *Pitt* said, that however proper it might be to fix at some distant period after the union such an identity of taxation, yet for the present it would be wise and politic not so far to offend existing local prejudices as to require immediately an equal portion of burthens to be sustained by Ireland, but to exact for the present only that proportion which Ireland hitherto paid in time of peace and war.

The several Resolutions were then agreed to, and ordered to be reported to the House.

Feb. 14. Mr. Douglas reported the said Resolutions to the House. On the question, "That the said report be now brought up,"

Mr. *Hobhouse* rose to explain the motives which governed his vote that night. When he first heard that ministers were employed in forming a scheme of union between Great Britain and Ireland, it was no small degree of surprise to him that they should have resorted to an expedient, which went to the destruction of the rights of the Irish nation, and could not but meet with the opposition of people of all classes, except such as wished for a separation between the two countries. How praiseworthy had been the exertions of the people and parliament of Ireland in the suppression of civil discord. Had not the yeomanry of that country bravely stood forward for the sake of maintaining the established constitution? Would they not think it an act of the basest ingratitude, to be called upon to surrender that established constitution, for which they had been ready to lay down their lives? What would be the effect of such a system on the minds of the reformers of Ireland? He meant not those hypocrites who, under the pretext of a parliamentary reform, really aimed at a revolution, but those who knew the value of their independent parliament, admired the true spirit of the constitution, and only wished to correct those abuses which had crept into its practice. Such would, by the system of a union, find their prospects blasted, and consequently feel great aversion to the measure. With respect to the Catholics, who consisted of three-fourths of the population of the country, they, of all others, must suffer most in consequence of a union. Many of the penal laws against them had, indeed, been repealed, but degrading incapacities, to which no man ought to be subject, until his opinions, of whatever nature they were, had shown themselves in overt acts of mischief, still remained. The elective franchise had, indeed, been granted to them, but the right of sitting in parliament had not been ceded, and thus the object they long had in view, and the attainment of which earl Fitzwilliam afforded them strong inducement to expect, would be entirely defeated by a legislative union. Was it not obvious then, that by all these different classes of men a union would be received, not merely with dislike, but indignation? Surely ministers, instead of bringing it forward, might have profited by the experience of what passed in the year 1759, when a report was circulated that a union between the two countries was intended. He had looked into Dodsley's Annual Register for that year, and there he found it stated, that, upon the surmise of a projected union, "a mob of many thousands assembled, broke into the House of Lords, insulted them, would have burnt the Journals if they could have found them, and set an old woman on the throne; that not content with this, they obliged all the members of both Houses whom they met in the streets, to take an oath, that they would never consent to such a union; that many coaches of obnoxious persons were cut or broken, their horses killed, &c.; that one gentleman in particular narrowly escaped being hanged,

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a gallows being erected for that purpose; that the horse and foot were drawn out on this occasion, but could not disperse them until night; and that the next day addresses to the lord lieutenant were agreed to, and a committee of inquiry appointed." If such disturbances were caused by the mere report of a union, and when Ireland, not being in possession of an independent parliament, would not have had those sacrifices to make which she had at present, how much stronger would be her objection now! At that period the illustrious father of the right hon. gentleman (lord Chatham) was at the head of affairs, and in the zenith of his popularity; and from his wisdom and prudence it might be inferred, that, had such a measure been really intended then, he would not have persevered for a moment, if he had seen such an opposition to it as that which appeared on the present occasion.—Surprised as Mr. H. was at the measure, he was still more so at the mode of proceeding. Would it not have effectually prevented all possible altercation between the two parliaments, to have tried first how far it was agreeable to the Irish nation? Had the parliament and the country spoken in favour of it, then, and not until then, should it have been submitted to the consideration of the British parliament. But the right hon. gentleman had not only proposed it in England on the same day that it was brought forward in Ireland, but pledged himself that no consideration whatever should divert him from his favourite object. Was not this an imprudent declaration?—But the perseverance of the right hon. gentleman was still more extraordinary. As the parliament of Ireland had expressed its determination not even to enter upon the discussion, why persist in the measure? What did it signify to state terms to those who would not listen to them? He, for one, thought, that no such change as that now proposed ought to be adopted unless it should appear to be called for by a crying necessity. The argument insisted upon to show that necessity was this—that domestic traitors, aided by foreign force, had laboured, and still would labour, to destroy the connexion between the two countries, unless they were more closely cemented; that nothing would be effectual to that end, but a union. No man more than himself deplored the late calamitous events in Ireland; but he would ask, whether the parliament of that country had shown itself inadequate to the task of suppressing disturbances, and repelling attacks upon its constitution? He would ask, whether a legislature acting upon the spot, and tremblingly alive to every danger, were not more likely to discover treasons and conspiracies than a legislature in a distant country. It was contended also, that the government of Ireland was extremely vicious, and contained in itself the seeds of separation; that the government being in the hands of the Protestant minority, and the honours and emoluments of the church being in the possession of the same minority, the mass of the people must be always discontented; that there must be a continual contest between the minority and majority. All this he was ready to allow: but he could not see how a union with this country was likely to remove the evil. How were the Catholics to be materially benefited? If they were only to be allowed to elect Protestant representatives in the imperial parliament, they would have less power than before; for they now have a share in sending 300 members to parliament; but then they would be confined to a far inferior number. If it were intended to give them the liberty of choosing representatives of their own religious persuasion, still that was short of what they looked to, and had been encouraged to expect; which was, to elect Catholics to serve in the parliament of their own country. They would also see, that by this measure the established religion was still to remain in the hands of the minority, and be hurt by comparing this with what took place at the time of the union with Scotland, where the majority of the people had their will granted to them, as far as respected religion. Would not the Catholics of Ireland naturally hold this language?—"It is evident that in the formation of your religious establishments, you are not governed by your opinion of the truth of the doctrine; for if that were the case, you would not have permitted two different religious establishments, the one in Scotland, the other in England. By what principle, then, are you actuated? By the will of the majority. Why then are the Catholics of Ireland not to enjoy the same privileges, as the Presbyterians of Scotland?" This would be a fresh source of discontent; and thus the grounds for religious jealousies and feuds, so far from being weakened by this measure

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would gain additional strength. But a strange kind of arithmetical comfort was offered to the Catholics in a pamphlet published by a gentleman in Ireland, high in office: "you are now a very great majority; you are now three-fourths of the population; but after a union, you will be in a minority; for the Protestants of both countries will far exceed the Catholics of the united kingdoms." Would such state logic satisfy their feelings? Would it not rather provoke the indignation of the Irish Catholics? They might be told that though they went to bed in a majority, yet by the magic of a piece of parchment, they awoke in a minority; but such a flimsy piece of sophistry would not impose upon men who knew how far they exceeded in number the Protestants in Ireland, or tend to heal the religious dissentions which prevailed in that distracted country. Another argument in favour of this measure was, the probability of a difference between two independent legislatures under one and the same executive magistrate upon important questions of imperial concern; and the case of the regency was quoted. With respect to the regency, he should not enlarge; for a very able reply on that head had been given on a former night by his hon. friend (Mr. Grey); he would only observe, that there was no other instance during the course of seventeen years, that this was a *casus omissus* in the constitution, and that by an act of parliament passed in both countries, providing that the regent or regency appointed in England should *ipso facto* become such, and upon the same conditions, in Ireland the recurrence of such a situation might for ever be prevented. He would however frankly confess, that it was this part of the subject which had raised in his mind more doubts than any other, for he saw a possibility that such differences might arise; but his fears had been considerably removed by considering, that some plan, borrowed either from the German or American federations, might be adopted, so as to ensure a co-operation on all great points of general interest. But even if there were a just degree of apprehension that important disagreements of opinion between the two legislatures might actually take place, the remedy proposed was worse than the disorder which had excited such strong fears in the breasts of some gentlemen. The great evil which he apprehended, was the alteration which would be made in the constitution of this country by the introduction of 100 members into the British House of Commons. Without wishing to impute any improper motives to them, without suspecting either their character or principles, it must naturally be supposed that the *amor patriæ*, that the desire to improve the condition of their own country, would compel them to act with any minister, whoever he might be; they could obtain nothing for their country by opposing a minister; their only hope would be by joining his party, and thus by such an acquisition of strength a minister would become altogether invincible. The right hon. gentleman might smile at this language, and think he was already invincible by his majority without any such aid; but this would be an alarming increase to the influence of the crown. There would be a superfluity of patronage when the Irish nation was represented by a so much smaller number than at present. Some of this excess the minister would have the power to scatter among the representatives of Great Britain. Besides there might be now two checks on the conduct of ministers, one on the part of Ireland, and another on the part of England; and in that respect the possibility of difference between two independent legislatures, which raised so much alarm, was a great advantage; but the consequence of this measure would be, that one of those checks would be taken away by the dissolution of the Irish legislature, and the other would be weakened by the importation into that House of so many Irish members. As an Englishman, therefore, he protested against this measure, because it tended to destroy the fair balance of the English constitution.—But commercial advantages to Ireland had been stated in favour of a union, here he would beg leave to ask, whether as the number of absentees would be considerably increased, the value of their imports would not suffer, and consequently their exports be diminished? But it was said that this loss would be balanced by the introduction of British capital. This argument had no weight with him. There would be no increase of British or other capital, where the proprietor of it had no consciousness of security. How could that consciousness exist while religious feuds continued? But we were told that the practical advantages of a union were to be seen in the case of Scotland,

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That Scotland had thriven since the union was most true; but he had not yet heard it conclusively argued, that the success of Scotland was owing to the union; for, even in the opinion of Adam Smith, who thought that Scotland derived some benefits from the union, the establishment of banks, by the accommodations afforded to the landholder and the merchant had, during the thirty years preceding the publication of his book, contributed "a great deal" to the extension of the commerce and agriculture of that country. Besides, Ireland itself had thriven of late years; and why should it change a system under which its population and trade had flourished? Why should it give up what enabled it to do well, upon the precarious chance of doing better, but which, perhaps, might destroy it altogether in commerce, as well as in constitution? But we were told, that Ireland would not lose her independence. "Did not the very act of her meeting to treat recognize her independence?" Granted; but for what object were the commissioners of the two countries to treat? Was it not for the surrender of the Irish parliament? England and Ireland then might meet as independent parties; but both of them would not part as such, if Ireland consented to the bargain. Nor should we wonder if Irishmen received the proposal with indignation; for certain he was, that, if an overture of that nature were made to the members of the British parliament, they would all rise up and say, "No, we will never resign the independence of our legislature, or, in other words, the freedom of our country, for any advantages whatsoever." This would be the feeling of every true patriot. It was contended on one side, that the compact of 1782 was final, and that an attempt at union on the part of England was a breach of faith. It was urged on the other, that it was not regarded as final, because, by a subsequent resolution, the Irish parliament declared itself ready to adopt any farther means to give strength and stability to the connexion with Great Britain. But it could never be supposed that the parliament of Ireland would have committed such an act of *felo de se*, as to have passed a resolution inconsistent with the compact by which her independence was established, and in which she solemnly avers, that no power on earth can make laws to bind her, except her own King, Lords, and Commons; and that exclusive legislation was her birth-right, which, in every situation of life, she would assert and maintain. It was obvious that the subsequent resolution must have referred to commercial regulations, or other minor considerations. He could not, however, refrain from observing, that gentlemen on both sides had dilated too much on that topic. Let the adjustment of 1782 be considered as absolutely final. The parties to any compact might, by common consent, release each other, if they thought it to be for their mutual advantage.—The competency of the Irish parliament was affirmed with triumph, and the doubts of it were treated with scorn and derision by gentlemen on the ministerial side of the House, as well as by the minister himself. They said, that Mr. Foster and sir John Parnell had studiously avoided a denial of the competency, and that the only advocates for the incompetency were Dr. M'Nevin and Mr. Lewins, "gentlemen who filled a diplomatic capacity under the executive directory of the United Irishmen." But this was a mistake; for not only sir John Parnell, but Mr. Lee, Mr. Barrington, and Mr. Plunkett, all lawyers of eminence in their profession, had boldly contended, that parliament was not competent, and that although the union might receive the assent of the two legislatures, the people would not be bound by such an agreement; and Mr. Lee in particular had said, that the only constitutional mode of proceeding was, to dissolve the parliament and to summon a new one, giving notice at the same time, that they were to be assembled for the express purpose of considering this measure. This, in Mr. Lee's opinion would render the parliament competent, because they would have a special authority to enter upon that business. But without meaning to derogate from the weight justly due to all these gentlemen, he would introduce a passage from Mr. Locke, who, in his observations on civil government, argued thus:—"The legislative cannot transfer the power of making laws to any other hands; for it being but a delegated power from the people, they who have it cannot pass it over to others. The people alone can appoint the form of the commonwealth, which is by constituting the legislative, and appointing in whose hands that shall be: and when the people have said, we will submit to rules, and be governed by laws made by such men, and in such forms, nobody else can say other men shall make laws for them;

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nor can the people be bound by any laws, but such as are enacted by those whom they have chosen, and authorized to make laws for them. The power of the legislative, being derived from the people by a positive voluntary grant and institution, can be no other than what that positive grant conveyed, which being only to make laws, and not to make legislators, the legislative can have no power to transfer their authority of making laws, and place it in other hands."—He had heard it asserted, that great authorities could be cited on the other side; undoubtedly that was the case. Sir M. Hale and Mr. Justice Blackstone were great authorities. The right hon. gentleman and a learned gentleman (Mr. Grant) had deduced the consequences which followed from a denial of the competency of the Irish parliament. They had said, that "if in this instance it were necessary to recur to the sense of the electors, then their right to decide for the whole nation might be contested; then a convention of the people must be called, who must decide by universal suffrage; and the first question to be determined would be, whether the sense of a majority should be binding. Hence a scene of revolutionary confusion and horror would take place." He was not anxious to form a decided opinion upon this controversy as to the extent of the powers of parliament; for admitting that parliament was adequate to create even a new constitution, without previously taking the sense of the electors, still the sovereignty was in the people. Indeed, he understood the minister himself to entertain the same sentiment, when he talked of the sovereignty of the people in abeyance. Even Blackstone, who was so strong an advocate for the omnipotence of parliament, had a passage to the following effect; namely, that "the people were entitled to the free administration of the laws, to petition and remonstrate with the legislature, and finally to have arms for the defence of their liberties." This was a recognition of the sovereignty of the people in the last instance; it was an acknowledgment that the people have a right to resist their legislature in case it attempted to destroy their liberties. Indeed, this was a doctrine which formed the basis of all free governments; for if the people had no right to resist when their freedom was attempted to be taken away, then they must lose that freedom, whenever the legislature was in the humour to make the experiment. He knew the evils attendant upon this doctrine, that it led to anarchy; but the contrary doctrine, namely, that the people had no right to resist, led directly to despotism and perpetual slavery. In such a choice of evils, the alternative, he hoped, would never be difficult. He was most decidedly convinced of the right of resistance in the people in extreme and desperate cases, for the defence of their rights. Mr. H. concluded with saying, that the House must be convinced, unless he had failed in what he aimed to prove, that the parliament of Ireland was fully competent to the management and care of that country, and that if, for the sake of preventing a possibility of differences between the two parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland, an incorporative union were adopted, greater evils would be created, the present state of British representation and the vast patronage of the minister being considered, than those which were now so much the object of alarm. In his opinion this measure, under the existing circumstances of England and Ireland, instead of confidence, would introduce jealousy; instead of affection, hatred; instead of strength, weakness; instead of virtue, corruption.

Lord *G. L. Gower* said, he could not but think, that to two countries, situated as Great Britain and Ireland were, their sovereign, language, and constitution being the same, mutual advantages must be derived from a measure which tended to draw closer the connexion between them, and consolidate the strength and security of the Empire. He would agree that it would be wrong to stir a question of this nature, if no existing circumstances required it; and that no wise politician would, for the sake of supposed advantages, such as advancing the commerce of a country, propose it, if no practical inconvenience had resulted from the want of such a measure. It was not in times like these that he was disposed to risk experiments, or, from mere speculation, attempt to guard against the evils that might arise from possible differences between the two legislatures; but when the circumstances under which the present measure was brought forward were considered, he thought that it ought to be treated with every indulgence. A rebellion had actually broken out in Ireland; religious feuds raged with great violence; and these animosities of contending parties had created great evils, for which the le-

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gislature found itself unable to impart redress. When France was grasping at universal dominion, it became the parliaments of both countries to do every thing to strengthen the resources of the empire. It seemed strange that, under such circumstances, this measure should be received on the outset with such clamour; and it might have been expected that those who opposed it would have suggested some plan which would counteract the evils which stared them in the face. He would not inquire how far Catholic emancipation would answer the purpose; the contrary had been ably stated by the right hon. gentleman who filled the chair of the House; and it was the opinion of many in Ireland, that this could not be granted without endangering the situation of the Protestants in Ireland. But, were a union to take place, the admission of the Catholics to every political privilege would not be followed by their gaining that ascendancy of power which would be the case at present. Had any concessions or acts of conciliation hitherto tranquillized the country? So far from it, that they served rather to increase them. He was far from denying the competency of the Irish parliament to every purpose of legislation; but he must say, that their measures had failed of producing the desired effect. He could not but lament that the Irish House of Commons should refuse to give a fair hearing to the proposal of a union. If a local legislature was not calculated to relieve one part of the people without endangering the safety of the other, nor to repress insurrection and rebellion without the presence and assistance of British forces, surely every one must be anxious for some new mode, better calculated to ensure the peace and safety of Ireland, and the prosperity of the empire. He had been much concerned to hear of the opposition which had arisen to the measure, though it was with much satisfaction he had learned that some counties had come forward in favour of it; and he trusted that when the Resolutions came to be laid before the Irish House, when it saw how equitable they were, that false national pride would be succeeded by a different sentiment: he trusted that the minister's declarations would meet with the concurrence of men in the other country of enlarged minds, and who are concerned for a real, instead of an ideal independence; the latter of which is only productive of insecurity: he trusted they would meet with the countenance of all those who felt indignation at the tyranny and oppression of the common enemy, and who wished that the British empire should hold up a buckler against the inroads of that encroaching power.

Mr. *Peel* said, that a regard for consistency made him anxious to trespass a few minutes on the patience of the House. —In the year 1785, Sir, during the discussion of the Irish propositions I was a petitioner at your bar against those arrangements; and I am warranted in saying, that I carried with me the sentiments of a great proportion of the trading interests of England. The object of those propositions, was to open a freer intercourse betwixt two independent kingdoms; the one possessing great foreign dominions and a universal commerce; the other possessing no foreign dominions, and very little trade; and, consequently, enjoying separate interests as they always must, while they have separate legislatures; because they may become separate, in fact. It was apparent, then, that those arrangements, however well intended, would have been prejudicial to the manufactures of Great Britain. The support I have given the present measure, does not arise from a change of sentiments, but of circumstances. This plan embraces great advantages, both political and commercial, which, by uniting two countries into one, are calculated to add strength and security to the empire; and is so essentially necessary at this time, when a daring attempt has been made, both by intrigue and force, to separate the countries, that inferior considerations ought not to weigh against a plan, which bids fair to frustrate such attempts, and to consolidate both the interest and the affections of the sister kingdoms. By a union we shall become one people; and though the benefits, in a commercial point of view, will be chiefly enjoyed by Ireland; yet, if an opinion may be formed of the sentiments of the trading body of this nation, from their patriotic and respectful silence, a disposition is manifested to reach out a friendly arm to their distressed brethren, to raise them from their present unhappy state to a condition of ease and comfort, similar to our own. This conduct does the British merchants and manufacturers much honour. —Though a friend to the principle of the measure, I think it my duty to draw the attention of the House to the sixth resolution. It must be the intention

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of every one to place both countries on an equal footing; and though nothing can be apprehended unfavourable to this country, during the present low circumstances of Ireland, it may have an operation, at a future time, highly prejudicial to our domestic industry. Each country is to provide for its own public debt; and that of Great Britain being infinitely larger than the debt of Ireland, heavy taxes are necessarily imposed on almost every article of consumption, which has so strong a tendency to enhance the price of labour, that goods manufactured under such a press, cannot be rendered on equally low terms with the produce of labour in places where similar burdens do not exist. Unless this objection be removed, the measure cannot be expected to have the concurrence of Great Britain. I feel it the more necessary to urge this point, having perceived a want of that liberality in the Irish government, which characterizes our own. The commercial intercourse now subsisting betwixt the two countries has lost every feature of reciprocity; British manufactures being heavily taxed on their admission into Ireland, whilst the goods of that kingdom meet with every encouragement here. Whatever may be the conduct of Ireland respecting the propositions of a union, I trust the firmness of administration will be such, as to refuse all concession to menace and intrigue; and that the aid which it may be deemed necessary to extend in future to that nation, will be received as the genuine offspring of affection: I always will oppose the giving much for nothing, when demanded as a matter of right.—Having said thus much as a commercial man, I beg the farther indulgence of the House as a member of parliament. I cannot compliment the gentlemen opposite on the grounds they have taken in the present debate. The interests of Great Britain are so deeply involved in this question, that I did expect the nature and extent of the sacrifices to be made on our part would have been strongly laid down, and formed such a contrast to the imperial advantages so forcibly stated by the friends of administration, as to have enabled the House to come to a matured decision on the subject. Not having been so assisted, my first impressions are unaltered; and therefore I shall give the measure my continued support. The independence of the Irish legislature having been unequivocally acknowledged by ministers, as it had been by parliament, and strenuously insisted on by the other side of the House. I am the more surprised to find, that the measure of union has been debated by the latter on Irish interest only, as if the question were finally to be disposed of here, without being argued elsewhere. There are scarcely two opinions in this House, respecting the utility of a union at a proper time, and on fair and equitable terms; though several gentlemen have expressed their marked disapprobation of the measure at this period. Considering the state of Ireland, with a weak government, a disunited people, and with the standard of rebellion erected in many parts of it, this plan is calculated to remove such alarming disorders; and the sooner the remedy is applied the better.—The manner of bringing forward the resolutions is deemed objectionable. Several gentlemen are of opinion, that they ought first to have been submitted to the Irish parliament, before they had experienced a discussion here. If the union involved in it sacrifices to be made exclusively on the part of Ireland, the complaint would have been just: the contrary, however, being the case, and the concessions confined to Great Britain, such a proceeding would have been highly disrespectful and injurious to this country. The feelings of pride and national consequence have been awakened in Ireland; they cannot reconcile themselves to the loss of their separate state, and distinct legislature: these are valuable privileges, boasted to have been acquired by their own exertion and patriotism, aided by the liberality of the British parliament. But let me ask, has not Great Britain likewise valuable privileges, purchased with the blood of our ancestors? A distinct kingdom, and an independent legislature? A people united, and removed from every danger, either foreign or domestic? In forming, therefore, an imperial legislature, Ireland loses no rights which are not likewise surrendered by Great Britain: the distinct kingdoms will be mixed into one compact body, and thereby derive additional strength and security: Ireland will gain by the proposed union, an imperial legislature, instead of a local legislature.—The small proportion of Irish members forming a part of the imperial parliament is considered by many as a surrender of their independence. That an opinion so unfounded should be entertained by a stranger to the character and constitution of the British

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parliament does not excite much astonishment; but that it should meet with the smallest countenance from those who have uniformly declared, that a change in the Irish representation must be for the better, is a little extraordinary. Every member of this House is a representative of Great Britain, and does not consider his duties confined to the place for which he was chosen. Yorkshire and Lancashire are the most extensive and flourishing counties in England, though individually they are very inadequately represented. When, therefore, the two countries are incorporated, it will be both the duty and inclination of every member composing the imperial parliament, to promote the interest of Ireland equally with that of every other part of the united kingdom. Instead, therefore, of Ireland losing two-thirds of her members, she will increase the number from 300 to 658; and I shall not be contradicted in saying, if a union should take place, it will be one of their first duties to administer relief, and ameliorate the condition of the people of Ireland, to communicate to them British comforts, and make them as flourishing and happy, as the people of Great Britain are, from enjoying the benefits of a more liberal system.—The remarks of an hon. member respecting an increase of absentees, merit particular notice. I am ready to admit, to the fullest extent, the injury which has already resulted to the sister kingdom from this circumstance. In a country, however, governed by equal laws and a free constitution, I see no practicable means of compelling a residence, or removing the existing evil, under the present order of things. The proposed union will have an effect the very reverse of that on which the hon. gentleman founds his opposition. Scotland, and the parts of England most remote from London, sustain no injury on account of people of rank and property spending a great proportion of their time and income in the capital. Manufactures, and other considerable objects of labour, generally flourish most at a distance from the seat of luxury, and the gay pursuits of genteel life. The want of access to the money circulating in England keeps Ireland comparatively poor and unindustrious. When the British markets are, therefore, laid open, property sent from that kingdom will be returned through the medium of industry, by which an equilibrium will be restored. The mind, unaccustomed to embrace objects of immense magnitude, will be assisted by a commercial intercourse. Suppose two houses in business, one of which is of the first respectability, with an immense capital, and extensive dealings in every part of the globe; the other in a comparatively low situation, with but little property, limited credit, and confined connexions, and a proposal is made by the former, to take the latter into partnership on equal terms; such an offer never having been refused, we may easily suppose is eagerly accepted: in this case, each party will lose his distinct firm, and the two houses become one. It is unnecessary to ask here, on which side the advantage lies, though both may be benefited. The clamours raised against the union by interested men in Ireland, may for a time mislead the judgment of many; the delusion however cannot be of long continuance; and a proposition, the most liberal on the part of Great Britain, and on the acceptance of which the salvation of Ireland depends, must be received with sentiments of satisfaction and gratitude, when reason shall take the place of passion; when policy shall prevail over prejudice; and wisdom shall govern, where enthusiasm misleads.

Earl *Temple* said:—Mr. Speaker; it might perhaps have better become me to have listened to the arguments adduced by others on this subject, than to have intruded my own; at the same time I cannot help feeling that, on a question of this importance, which so deeply affects the existence of one country, and the welfare of another, which involves topics so various, and interests hitherto so discordant, I should not do my duty as a member of parliament, if I gave a silent vote: and however an hon. gentleman might on a former night have congratulated the House and the country, that whatever might have been the pledge which the chancellor of the exchequer might have given, of his determination to persevere in the measure of a union between England and Ireland, the country and the House had not seconded him in the pledge; that hon. gentleman may now withdraw his congratulations, as the House has now received the measure, and it is no longer the measure of the minister, but of the country.

I think, Sir, that it particularly becomes the duty of every man who has the honour of parliament at heart, to rescue it from the charge which the hon. gentleman, who

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opposed the measure, has sent into the world,—"that the House is inclined to support a measure, which they wish the country to believe his majesty's ministers mean to carry into effect by force, by corruption, and by bribery." It should seem, from the language used in Ireland, and re-echoed here, as if, from the first moment of their coming into office, his majesty's ministers had only been watching for an opportunity to lay Ireland bound at the feet of England: and that having found it, they were determined to take advantage of it. That such language should be held by persons whose object has so long been the separation between the two countries, does not surprise me, but that such an idea should be broached in an English House of Parliament, and by gentlemen whose knowledge of the history of their country should have flashed conviction to their minds, even through the thick mist of prejudice and of party, gives me the greatest concern.

From the first moment of Irish dissaffection, and subsequent rebellion, it is not necessary for me to state to this House what has been unfortunately too self-evident, that the sole object of the promoters of those discontents, has been a separation between England and Ireland. In that country as well as in this, parliamentary reform has been made the mask to cover the distorted features of anarchy and rebellion. In Ireland, the prejudices of religious education have been called in to assist the cause of infidelity; every artifice has been made use of to inflame the ardent mind of the enthusiast; the mild lessons of religion have been perverted to the cause of treason; and the Catholic has been taught to look for emancipation only in the downfall of the government which protected him. The tenant was taught that murder was no crime, when practised against his landlord; the poor man was told, that in the cause of liberty, the knife might with propriety be plunged into the bosom of the rich man, who fed him; the pastor was sacrificed at the altar of his God, by the men to whom he preached the lessons which that God inculcated—lessons of mercy and of charity! Every bond of affection, every tie of connexion, of friendship, and of blood, were broken through, and all to arrive at the one great end of separation! The declarations, both in public and in private, of the chiefs of that rebellion, avowed that to be their real object, their real aim; and the opposition they now make to a measure calculated to draw the connexion between the two countries closer, shows what their views were, and what their disappointment is at those views being defeated. Is it then, Sir, to be wondered at, that England does not sit quiet, and view with unconcern this daring attempt to wrest from her the brightest jewel of her crown? Is it to be wondered at that England does not hesitate to take the only measure which now remains in her power, which, by confirming the existence of Ireland, confirms the security of the empire? and is it to be wondered at, that the men who have not scrupled to deluge their country in blood, in order to deliver up that country, bound, and weakened by its wounds, to an inveterate enemy, should oppose a measure calculated to save that country, "to blast their darling hopes, their future views!" In the words of the Arch-fiend in Milton, they exclaim—

"If then his Providence
Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
Our labour must be to prevent that end,
And out of good still to find the means of evil;
Which oft times may succeed, so as perhaps
Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb
His inmost counsels from their destin'd aim."

Well aware, Sir, am I, that there are many who oppose this measure, both in England and Ireland, on far different principles; well aware, Sir, am I, that there are some gentlemen who oppose it in Ireland, of known honour and integrity; men who have heretofore shown their attachment to their country, their loyalty to their king: that such men should so far forget their duty to their country, as to allow themselves to be made the dupes of popular prejudice, and of factious clamour, as to induce them to sacrifice the dearest objects of that country, to a temporary popularity, or to a momentary impulse of disappointment, gives me the greatest concern. The abilities of those men, in common with the rest of the world, I must admire; the perversion of them, I must as sincerely regret.

But, Sir, it should seem, from the language of the hon. gentlemen who oppose the measure here, as if the principle of the measure, was not so bad, but the moment was an improper one in which it was brought forward. Indeed, one hon. gentleman went so far as to state, that he believed there was scarcely a man in this House, who did not in his heart regret

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that the measure was brought forward at this moment. Now, Sir, for my own part, I can only give the opinion of an individual; but I do not scruple to assert, that if the principle of the measure be tolerable, this is the only moment when it ought to be brought forward. What, Sir, is the object of a union?—To rescue the country from the dangers which surround it, to ensure to it the continuance of that assistance by which it has already been preserved. Why put off the cure, till the disease has gained a head to baffle its effects? Why defer the remedy, till the efficacy of the medicine is counteracted by the violence of the distemper?

But, say the hon. gentlemen, how infamous is it to bring forward a measure to irritate the minds of the Irish, and to inflame their passions! That their passions are inflamed, that their minds are irritated, I allow; but that they are so by the measure of a union, I deny. Their passions are irritated by the factious endeavours of those men, who only look to this or any other measure, as a stock on which to engraft confusion and rebellion: their minds are inflamed by the strange dereliction of principle, by the sudden, by the unaccountable change in the opinion of those men to whom Ireland had before been accustomed to look, as the strongest advocates for Irish connexion with England, and the loudest assertors of the advantages which Ireland had received from that connexion; by the coalition of those men with a party which, Ireland had been told by them, was hostile to her interests, by the unnatural connexion of principles hitherto the most discordant, of politics the most jarring; by a coalition, which has drawn into one point all the faction, all the prejudices, all the violence, and all the intemperance, which had before been scattered over the face of that unhappy country. On the heads of those men, and on their heads alone, who have deserted their country, in order to fetter its government, and cramp its counsels, fall the irritation of the passions, and the inflammation of the mind of Ireland: and on their heads fall the consequences, whatever they may be, which, unless the measure of a union takes place, will, I fear, result from a coalition, and a conjunction, so full of mischief, and so pregnant with evils!

But, say the hon. gentlemen, how mean it is to take advantage of the weakness of Ireland, and to force this measure upon the country! How much more mean, how much more despicable would it have been in England, to have deserted Ireland in the moment of her weakness: to have neglected her in the time of her peril; to have said to her, "by your own folly, by your own imbecility, you have drawn these evils upon yourself. By your own exertions extricate yourself. We will not move a step to save you. We have a constitution; we have a government, by the advantages of which we have escaped those horrors to which you have fallen a victim; but those blessings, and those advantages we will enjoy alone; do not hope to partake them with us." Perhaps this would have been the language which the hon. gentlemen had wished England to have held to Ireland. Perhaps they would have wished his majesty's ministers had so far forgot the duty which they owe to Ireland, as to have withheld the assistance, which the purse and the arms of England have given her, in order to have held her up, as a set-off to England, and a terrible example to Europe, of the effects of disunion, of rebellion, and of discontent.

But, says one hon. gentleman, his majesty's ministers mean to carry a union by corruption, by turning out the old servants of the crown, and by substituting others more subservient to their views; by holding out "a lure to the Catholics; the hopes of a dockyard to Cork; and of a maritime force to Ireland." Such is the charge brought forward by the hon. gentleman, and so far we understand him. But then he exclaims, "No wonder Ireland startles at corruption, so offensive; at bribery, so open; England ought to have granted all these benefits before!" Thus, then, the enigma is explained, the murder is out: it is not the bribery which excites the patriotic indignation of the hon. gentleman, but the clumsiness of it: how awkward, says he, thus to offer as a bribe, what could have been snugly and quietly bestowed as a gratuity! the consequences would have been the same; and whenever the union could have been brought forward, this generosity of ministers would have had all the effect without carrying with it the obloquy, of a bribe! Such is the singular mode of reasoning of the hon. gentleman; not aware, perhaps, that the best reason why Ireland was not bribed in the manner, and at the time he wished, was, that his majesty's ministers, perhaps, had not made it up to their minds: the

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people of England had not made it up to their minds either, to have granted emancipation to the Catholics, at the moment when that emancipation might have been used as an instrument of separation, to have given Cork a dockyard, and Ireland a maritime force, which would only have been conferring a maritime force and a dockyard upon an enemy!

But at length comes the grand objection to a union, both in Ireland, and in the mouths of the hon. gentlemen in this House. Irish union will take away Irish independence! Now, Sir, I will suppose a perfect stranger to Ireland, and to its relative situation with England, landed in Dublin, stunned with the noise, and confounded with the clamour and disorder of the inhabitants; he would naturally conclude that the monarchy of Ireland was independent; that her trade, her resources, and her credit, were independent; and that England was striving to dethrone the monarch of Ireland, to attach the crown to her own, and to seize on the commerce, the advantages, the wealth, and the resources, which are so much superior to any that England can boast of; and, consequently, so much the object of English ambition. How astonished would he be, when he discovered that the crown of Ireland was not in dispute; that her trade, her credit, and her wealth, were not in dispute; but he would be told by the anti-unionist, that Ireland was struggling for her independence, the noblest birthright of Heaven. What then (would he say) England then means to withdraw the protection she has granted to your commerce, the aid she has extended to your credit, and the assistance she has given to your arms? No would be the answer of the anti-unionist, that is not the case: the fleets of England still protect the coasts of Ireland; the troops of England still fight the battles of Ireland; the parliament of England still protects the trade of Ireland: but we are contending for our Independent Legislature. What then, England proposes to take away your independent legislature, to abolish your courts of justice, and to subject the property of Ireland to the decisions of British lawyers? No, must be the reply; we do not hear that our courts of justice are to be abolished, or that the property of Ireland is to be thrown at the mercy of English lawyers; but we are contending for our parliament. What then, England means to take away your parliament, to destroy every trace of the institution, and to subject Ireland to the beck of an English minister? I really am no longer surprised at your opposition to such a measure. That is not the case, neither, must be the answer. The parliament of Ireland is not to be abolished: the place of its sittings only is to be changed; it will only be joined with the already united parliament of England and of Scotland; and we shall be no more at the beck of an English minister, than we are now. What then, Ireland is to pay the debt of England? I really do not wonder at your unwillingness to pay a debt not of your own contracting! No; not quite that: we shall not be obliged to pay one sixpence more of debt than we are now. What then, you are to pay English taxes? No; (how stupid are you not to discover our grievances) we shall not be obliged to pay one shilling of English taxes. The last question then, which the stranger would probably ask, would be, Please then to tell me what your independence is, which you are so anxious to preserve, and which you are so fearful of losing As every principle of independence that I have hitherto formed or entertained, falls, I find, very short of what I hear called Irish independence. Now, Sir, really to that question, I can give no answer, I can carry on the dialogue no farther; as on that subject, I am just as much at a loss, and require just as much information, as the stranger can possibly feel the want of.

I have now, Sir, carried on what I conceive would pretty nearly be the dialogue between the anti-unionist, and a stranger, perfectly ignorant of the state of Ireland. But the hon. gentlemen, who, I conceive, do not fancy themselves perfectly strangers to the state of Ireland boldly assert, that a union will infringe the compact of 1782; the compact which the hon. gentlemen think proper to call "final.' Now, Sir, in the first place, I will ask the hon. gentlemen, who ever called that compact "final?" Did the parliament of England call it final? No Did the parliament of Ireland call it "final?" No. Did ever any one call that compact "final," till the hon. gentlemen chose to call it so, because it best suited their purposes that it should be thought so? No. How, putting Ireland upon the same footing as ourselves, placing her on ground on which Ireland could treat on a perfect equality with England (which after all, let gentlemen say what they please, was all that we did by the compact of 1782);

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how, treating with her now upon those grounds, establishing her independence by the very act of treating with her, can be called infringing the independence of Ireland, I leave to the ingenuity of sir John Parnell and Mr. Foster to discover. If we did not acknowledge Ireland to be independent, where would be the necessity of this discussion? If we did not consider her parliament as independent, why should we be guided by its decision; why should we wait for its consent, when, in that case all that would be necessary for us to do, would be to pass the measure here, and to carry it into effect in Ireland?

But the fact is, Sir, that a union would take away part of Irish independence. It would take away that part of herindependence, which could not ensure to itself the only blessings which can render independence valuable; it will take away that independence which has not been able to secure its country from a persecution worse than the most galling slavery: from a dependence of the most miserable, of the most disgraceful sort—a dependence on the mercy of an inveterate enemy. From the first moment, Sir, when Fitzgerald and Fitzstephens first planted the English colony in Ireland; from the period when Ireland was awakened by England from the slumber of savage barbarity and rude nature, in which she was plunged, a constant scene of struggle presented itself between the two nations till, in the year 1782, England gave up the contest, and allowed Ireland to try the experiment she longed for—the experiment of independence. It was the hope, Sir, as it was the expectation of every rational man, when the independence of the country, as far as was consistent with its connexion with England, was conceded, that she would have remained contented, and enjoyed with tranquil pride, the privileges she had gained. Was that the case? Has Ireland shown a wish to be be contented, and to remain an appendage, a privileged appendage to England? No. From the year 1782, we have seen concession conceded on concession by England, and demand repeated on demand by Ireland.

At the period, Sir, to which Ireland can only look back with horror, as to a precipice, by miracle escaped, at the portentous moment when the question of the regency was discussed, the discontented spirits in Ireland showed the cloven foot, and gained the first step towards the attainment of their grand object, separation. The events of that momentous crisis, when the eye of the British empire was dimmed with tears, and its brow clouded with sorrow and with consternation, are so recent in the memories of every one who hears me, that I shall draw a veil over them, which should never be raised, save when it may be necessary to mark the attempt which Ireland then made to take advantage of the storm which clouded the horizon. From that moment, Sir, we have seen the progressive, the interrupted, but the persevering attempts at separation, until the fire which hitherto had smouldered in silence and in obscurity, burst out into a blaze, which involved the dearest interests of Britain in the conflagration, and threatened consequences the most fatal and the most horrid. The experiment of Irish independence had failed; Ireland had herself cut the ground from under her feet, on which England had placed her; Ireland had herself rejected the footing of equal connexion which England had conceded to her, by negociating with the common enemy both of England and of Ireland. Irish independence had not been able to preserve itself from being sold to that enemy. Irish independence had not been able to protect its country from a rebellion in its bosom, which, under the stale pretext of parliamentary reform, aimed at the diabolical object of an Irish republic. England, Sir, had given to Ireland every thing which her constitution allowed her to bestow. She could get no more from her; she turned to another country, and took from France, what, thank God, she could not receive from England; a pattern of treason, of anarchy, and of rebellion. By the loyalty, by the laudable and persevering spirit of those men who still preferred English connexion to French fraternity, that rebellion was resisted, but not quelled. Every prejudice which could be worked upon was excited to assist the progress, to insure the success of the revolution; the hitherto most discordant parties, the Catholics and the Presbyterians, were called in to aid the bloody work, because they were told, that their exertions would attain the great objects of Catholic emancipation, and of parliamentary reform. So completely had the authors of these horrors masked their real objects, their real views, that it is a fact perfectly in the recollection of those who hear me, how completely certain persons on this side of the water were the dupes of their artifices; and how at one time we were told,

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"would but the parliament of England interfere in the government of Ireland," (the government, whose independence, we were now told, the parliament of England guaranteed), "would but England interfere, the people would be happy, Ireland would be contented!" until at length, the veil was torn away, and the chiefs of the rebellion themselves avowing what their views were, confessed, that neither Catholic emancipation, nor parliamentary reform, were the real objects of their wishes or of their desires; but that their sole and only pursuit was, separation from England, and union with France. Union they were determined to have: but unfortunately they preferred a French to an English one!

Such is the situation of the country; a decided revolutionary party in its bosom; a diabolical spirit which has been bent, but not broken; the existence of the country secured only for a moment by the assistance which England so generously bestowed; its capital garrisoned by British troops, which that country welcomed into its bosom with shouts of gratitude and of joy. Ask grateful Ireland a few months ago, to whom she ascribed her safety and her protection; she would have answered, "to England, who sent her troops over and saved us;" and yet these very troops are now exposed to the insults of a factious populace, to every species of opprobrium which the savage fury of Irish republicans can inflict; branded with the names of English Mameloucs, sent by an English minister to force a union down the throat of Ireland, at the point of the bayonet; and all because they have shown themselves the friends of good order and of good government, steady to their duty, their country, and their king! and yet this is the country which is to stand alone, disdainful of assistance, and proud in her own independence!

But no! says grateful Ireland—"we do not wish to be separated from England; we will enjoy English connexion, but we will not receive English union." How kind and how condescending on the part of Ireland! "When we are in danger," say they) "we will call upon you to send your troops over to fight the battles we cannot fight for ourselves! we will call upon you to allow yourselves to be stripped of your national, of your constitutional force; we will enjoy every blessing which your connexion can give us; we will allow our trade to be protected by a British parliament, to be encouraged by a British capital; but the moment you ask us to repay, in some measure, these benefits, by partaking of the blessings of your government, and the protection of your laws; the moment you ask us to give our mite towards the maintenance of the empire, by taking the means in our power to prevent France from making Ireland a stepping-stone into England, from being a thorn in her side, and a serpent in her path, we beg to be excused; you have saved us once; when we want you again, we will call upon you!" Such is the language of Irish gratitude; and now, say those men who before wanted England to interfere with the *independent* government of Ireland, do not bring forward your union, do not attempt to carry it through, because—because what? because, forsooth, you will interfere in Irish independence! Good God, Sir, if Ireland could support her independence, without leaning the whole weight of it upon the shoulder of England; if Ireland could support Irish independence, with English connexion, I should be the first to say,—do not touch that independence; I should be the first to resist any attempt to take it away; but I appeal to every man who hears me, to every unprejudiced man in Ireland, and let me be told, whether Ireland is, or is not, in the same relative situation with England, in which she was when England conceded her independence. Sir, I do not wish to upbraid Ireland with benefits; but when I am told that the happiness and the credit of Ireland are to be the price of a union, I am obliged, on my side, to recur to arguments to prove that whatever may be the happiness, whatever may be the credit of Ireland, that happiness and that credit can only be maintained by the protection of England.

Sir, I will beg the House to look to the situation of Ireland in the reign of Edward 6th and mark how strongly the then existing circumstances of Ireland coincided with the present. Owing to the attempts which were then made to introduce the Protestant religion into a Catholic country, Ireland became disaffected and discontented. Philip of Spain saw the opportunity which was given him, to take advantage of the irritation of the public mind; partial invasions had been attempted on the coast of Ireland, which, from its situation, was particularly open to his attack. The impending danger gave serious alarm to the vigilant mind of Elizabeth. What were the precautions which she took

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to counteract it? She sent troops over, which, in the beginning of the succeeding reign gained possession of the country. The Brehon law was then abolished; the English law was substituted over Ireland. Now, Sir, however strong (and strong it certainly is) the comparison may be between the situation of Ireland then, and its situation now, the comparison holds good no farther; and the conduct of England under similar circumstances, is most widely different. Where Elizabeth held out the sword, England now extends the olive branch—where Elizabeth involved every party, and every prejudice in one indiscriminate ruin, and right of conquest, England now says—"forget all feuds, all parties, all prejudices, and partake of what with confidence I can recommend—my own constitution, and my own government!"

The next argument which I shall take notice of, used by the hon. gentlemen, includes a contradiction most extraordinary. The hon. gentlemen state as a very strong argument against the union, that the parliament of Ireland has no right to pass an act which, in its principle, is, contrary to the constitution of the country. Now, Sir, it is most whimsical, that with the same breath with which they tell you this, they allow the competence (and they recommend the exercise of it)—but they allow the competence of the Irish parliament, to do what? why to give complete emancipation to the Catholics. Now, Sir, I call upon the hon. gentlemen to mention any one measure so completely militating against every principle of the Irish constitution, as it now stands, than the very measure they recommend;— nothing, say they, can save the country but Catholic emancipation; and yet the parliament cannot receive the measure of a union, because they can do nothing against the constitution of Ireland!

But, says Ireland, the moment you take away (what they are pleased to term) our independence, you hurt our trade, you cripple our credit, and you diminish our resources. Now, Sir, the struggles of an independent mind to preserve that independence, I can view with pleasure and with admiration; but really objections so futile, so weak, and so childish, deserve scarcely to be treated seriously. How, Sir, can an English union affect the trade of Ireland, free as it is, and supported to the degree it is, by British capital? Will a union diminish the encouragement to the employment of British capital? No: the additional security which will be given to the country, must give additional encouragement to the employment of British capital. The value of land must increase in proportion to the protection which is given to the landholder. What encouragement has any man now to lay out his money in land in Ireland? None. It is a fact, known and acknowledged, that at the time when Great Britain conceded to Ireland the appeal to her courts, the value of land fell in Ireland; part of its security was taken away, its risk proportionably increased. The absentee will have some temptation to reside upon his estate, which he will have some temptation to improve. Ask him now his object and his wish; and he will tell you, it is to draw his money, and as much of it as he can, out of Ireland. When government guarantees not only the property, but the protection of it to him, he will then have some temptation to throw back that money into the bosom of the country, in order to improve a property he will then have some chance of preserving. What, Sir, is the value of an Irish estate now? scarcely a year's purchase: the landholder distrustful of the situation of the country, seeing it open to domestic treason, and to foreign invasion; unable of itself to repress the former, or to prevent the latter, looks only to draw his annual rent from his estate, thinks himself happy if he can get it, and looks no farther. This cannot be the case, if Ireland is united with England. The protection in the one country will be the same as the protection in the other, and the Irish landholder will have the additional advantage of having the faith of the British parliament, and the power of the British people, pledged to secure that property to him.

With respect to the arts, their encouragement is, indeed, but poor in Ireland; their progress has been slow, their growth has been checked, the weight of poverty has oppressed them, the chill hand of prejudice has frozen their current; the elasticity which they have lost, a union must restore, as it will be the interest of England to encourage the efforts of the manufacturer, the artisan, and the adventurer, in a country which will, then form an integral part of itself. But, Sir, it should seem, from the language held in both countries, as if, in case of a union, all the advantages would be on the side of England, all the disadvantages would fall

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to the share of Ireland. That, Sir, is a question worth inquiring into; and I would ask the violent anti-unionist, what are the advantages which England is to gain, distinct from Ireland, in case of a union? Is it protection?—Separate the two countries, and then let Ireland ask herself, which is most in want of protection. Is it property?—The complaint of Ireland already is, that too much of her property goes through the hands of absentees, and never benefits its native country—why? because the absentee has an encouragement to lay out his money in England, which he cannot have in Ireland, in its present state. To give the resident as well as the absentee, an opportunity of laying out his money with security, as well as with profit, must be the consequence, as it certainly will be the object, of a union. Let, Sir, the anti-unionist look to Scotland; and let him ask whether her trade, whether her population, her manufactories, her credit; whether the value and the improvement of her land have been diminished or increased by the union?—let him look to her capital, and let him ask, whether its magnificence, its population, its trade, and its consequence, have been improved or hurt by the union? Let him ask these questions, and when he has received the answer, which sure I am he will receive; let him then ask himself, what is there in the situation of his own country, what is there in her resources, or in the spirit of her inhabitants, to prevent her from attaining the same blessings which Scotland has procured by the union?

But then asks, whimsically enough, the hon. gentleman, how can you prove that Scotland would not have arrived at all these advantages without a union? Why really, Sir, that is a question very much out of the power of human understanding to answer; but if he will allow me, I will refer the hon. gentleman to the only source from whence he is likely to gain any information on the present subject, and that is to the Scotch themselves: and let him ask them, whether they conceive Scotland could have risen to the consequence or enjoyed the wealth she has, without a union? But then, rejoins the hon. gentleman, equally whimsically, how do you know that Ireland will arrive at those blessings with the assistance of a union? Now that, Sir, again, is a question as much out of the reach of human ken, as much beyond the powers of human comprehension to understand, as the other. But, perhaps, the hon. gentleman will allow us to judge by comparison, and to conclude (pretty justly perhaps) that there is no very probable reason why Ireland should be less a favourite of fortune than Scotland has been, particularly too, when it is considered that Scotland had not half the advantages which Ireland possesses, either in situation, or in the assistance which England has held out to her, and which she did not hold out to Scotland before the union.

But, Sir, to return. Is it consequence which England is to derive exclusively from Irish union? Unfortunately, sad experience has taught us, what I wish to God it had equally taught every man, who pretends to be anxious for the welfare of Ireland, that to English dominion and to English consequence Ireland owes her protection, her credit, and her existence. But then, said an hon. gentleman (and astonished was I to hear that language held in an English House of Commons), the union England offers is nothing but French fraternity! Good, God, Sir! where does the hon. gentleman look for the comparison? Does he look for it in Switzerland? Let him take amongst the still smoking ashes of that devoted country!—let him probe her bleeding wounds!—let him listen to the groans of her inhabitants!—to the cries of her violated daughters, of her orphan children, of her parents bewailing the offspring they have lost!—and when he has "supped full of these horrors," let him, if he has the feelings of a man, if he has the spirit of an Englishman, let him say, there is the comparison between English union, and French fraternity! My God, Sir, what was there in the constitution of Switzerland that gave France a right to interfere in it—what was the protection which France had extended to Switzerland—what was the commerce which France had secured to Switzerland—what was the aid which France has bestowed upon Switzerland—what claim had France upon the gratitude of Switzerland, to give France a title to interfere? And did France offer to the choice of the people of Switzerland the blessings of her constitution? No! She offered in exchange for the peaceful government of Switzerland, for the simple comforts which contented the inhabitants of her mountains, for the religion to which she was attached, she offered the enjoyment

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of anarchy and of confusion! the comforts of poverty and of wretchedness! the blessings of atheism and of infidelity! she offered them at the point of the bayonet! she enforced them by arguments of rapine, of robbery, and of blood! If the hon. gentleman cannot find his comparison there, let him look onward to Italy; to her late peaceful, envied scenes! let him look to Rome, to Venice, to Savoy, to Brabant, to Holland, to Egypt!—the objects of French fraternity, because the objects of French ambition! let him look from the Alps to the Pyrennees, from the North Seas to the Nile; and in that vast expanse of country let him place his finger, if he can on any one spot of ground, and say, there is the comparison between the union which England offers to Ireland, and the fraternity which France inflicts upon her victims.

Sir, the hon. gentleman favoured us the other night with what he conceived constituted the component principles of a Jacobin. I now will give him my ideas on the subject. The villifying the constitution of his country, depreciating her resources, decrying her credit, cramping her exertions, encouraging her discontented, withholding the aid which every man of honour and of principle owes to his country when in danger, "throwing bitters into the vessel of her peace," constitute what England has unfortunately seen too much of,—but what she cannot be too much aware of, constitute an English Jacobin. I beg pardon, Sir, of the House, for the warmth into which I have been betrayed on this subject. But whilst I have a nerve to feel, or a voice to convey my feelings, I never will shrink from grappling with a position, or a comparison so odious and so monstrous.

But, Sir, one hon. gentleman has used, in my opinion, a very singular argument; he has said, that by a union the parliament will be moved out of the country, the disaffected will remain, and the invitation to the enemy will be as strong as ever. Now, Sir, perhaps the hon. gentleman will allow me, that the invitation to the enemy proceeds from the discontents of the people; and if he will concede me this point, I will beg leave to ask him what may be the cause assigned by the people of their disaffection? he will perhaps remember, that it was a distrust in the ability of parliament to relieve their distresses, or to redress their grievances. Now, Sir, how the removal of that parliament can produce the effects the hon. gentleman dreads, I cannot myself conceive; for either the actual removal of the presence of the supposed grievance, must also carry with it the pretended effect of that grievance, or the coalition of that parliament with the British Houses must give to it an increased vigour and activity, which must entirely take away from the Irish any fears of its ability to redress any grievances it may think worthy its notice. Either way, therefore, I think the change of the locality of the Irish parliament must of necessity have the contrary effect to that which the hon. gentleman predicts. The hon. gentleman follows up his argument with another equally whimsical. "Not only," says he, "the invitation to the French will be as strong as ever, but an additional cause of discontent will be given." And what is this additional cause of discontent? "Why, the aristocracy will withdraw themselves from the country" (which, by-the-by, in the first place, I deny); "consequently the cottager will feel an additional cause of discontent." Now, Sir, in allowing the fact, I deny the consequence. The discontent of the Irish cottager arises from this cause, not from the absence of the aristocracy, but from the carelessness of the aristocracy, as to what happens to the cottager, from the want of provision made for him, from the want of protection held out to him, when he is in distress. In England, when the poor man, either by sickness of himself, or his family, is disabled from gaining his bread by his labour, he knows where to turn for help; he knows that by the law the rich man is obliged to preserve him from hunger and from want. The Irish cottager, alas! has no such prospect. When sickness or mischance takes from him the means of his subsistence, he has no where else to look, he has no protection to claim, he has no prospect, save that of hunger and want; to the mercy only he is left of that God who feeds the hungry, and comforts the afflicted! The thousands of the lower Irish, who every year, in the harvest months, flock to this country, carry back with them accounts of the state of the English poor, which only make the unfortunate Irishman look back to his own miserable hovel, to his forlorn and destitute situation, with increased feelings of anguish and of misery! to a union only he looks

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with hope; because by a union only can he see a chance given him of partaking in the plenty and the comforts which fall to the lot of his English brethren. And I assert the fact, that the cottager looks with anxious expectation to a union, which he knows can alone open the door to a participation of those comforts which the English poor receive from the generosity of an English parliament.

I have now, Sir, no more to say. I have gone much farther into the question than I intended to have done, and I have no apology to make to the House for the time which I have taken up, save the importance of the measure; and, I trust, that will be deemed sufficient. The ground on which I go is most simple. Such is the situation of Ireland; and so little, in my opinion, is the spirit of rebellion crushed within her, that unless some material and some speedy change takes place in her relative situation, Ireland, I fear, will be lost to England. To my astonishment Sir, I saw it reported in the Irish newspapers, as the speech of an Irish member of parliament, that "the country ought to recollect, that when America struggled to throw off her yoke, France assisted her. France, under her old government, aided America on the other side of the Atlantic? is not the present government of France more powerful than the ancient one, and is not Ireland nearer than America! England is most vulnerable through Ireland." Now, Sir, if this speech was really made, as it is stated, I do not hesitate to say, that a more decided, and a more open invitation to the enemy I never heard. But I am convinced that if the speech was actually made, as reported, it was made with a very different meaning from that which the words so obviously convey. My chief object, however, in mentioning it was, that there is in the conclusion of that speech the strongest argument to England in favour of a union that possibly could have been brought forward. "England is most vulnerable through Ireland." It is so; and are Englishmen, is an English parliament now to hesitate, whether they will adopt the only measure which will take away from Ireland a power she now has, and which her discontented sons have exercised, the power of calling upon France to crush the strength of England by invading the shores of Ireland? Let Ireland ponder well on a speech, reported to have been made in her House of Commons, by one whom she then dignified with the name of patriot, "Ireland," said he: "is connected with England, not by allegiance only, but by liberty. The crown is one great point of union, but Magna Charter is a greater: we could get a king any where, but England is the only place we can look to for a constitution. We are not united with England, as judge Blackstone foolishly asserts, by conquest but by charter."—Such was the language of Mr. Grattan!

In short, Sir, Ireland has now to decide which she prefers, whether an increase of power, or a continuance of rebellion; whether an accumulation of wretchedness, or an accession of wealth, of credit, and of resources! whether the friendship, the tried friendship of England, or the fraternity, the tried fraternity of France! whether she will confide her interests and her safety to the diplomatic abilities of Dr. M'Nevin and Mr. Lewins; to the legal talents of Mr. Emmett: to the constitutional efforts of that *self-avowed traitor*, Mr. Arthur O'Connor (with whose name in this House, I believe, we have been told, the word treason should never be coupled); to the patriotic exertions of any set of men, who, with arms in their hands, and with treason in their hearts, talk of Irish independence, and deluge Ireland with Irish blood; or whether she will accept the proposition which England holds out to her: England! who offers the surest pledge of her sincerity, the participation in the blessings of her own constitution: in the advantages of her own government; the constitution and the government of a country where domestic traitors, as well as foreign enemies, have shown themselves but have shown themselves only to be subdued! Conceiving as I do, the measure of a union most necessary to the existence of Ireland, and most advantageous to the interests of England, I shall certainly give my most earnest and decided vote for the report of the committee being brought up.

Mr. *T. T. Jones* said, he had used the words French fraternization, and would still continue to assimilate the present measure to the means employed by the French for similar purposes, if it was attempted to be crammed down the throats of Irishmen by means of force or intimidation. He was a warm friend to the interests of England, neither was he indifferent to those of Ireland; but as a friend to English rights and English liberty, he must beseech the

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chancellor of the exchequer as an Englishman and a statesman, not to attempt to introduce a hundred Irish members into the British House of Commons; they would only add to his (barring a joke) muzzled majority. Never, so long as he lived, would he patiently see the voice of 116 placemen prevail over the feelings and the opinions of three millions of the people of Ireland. He must, therefore seriously warn the right hon. gentleman not to persevere in his plan: if he did, the day on which he should introduce his hundred Irish members into the British House of Commons he must look upon and lament as a fatal day to the independence and happiness of both countries, and England, at least, might hereafter say of it—

Illa dies primus lethi primusque malorum
Causa fuit.

Mr. *Bird* said, that there was no equality of benefit in the plan, the advantages being all upon one side, and the sacrifices on the other. It would moreover affect the revenue, and especially the tax upon income. As to the resolutions of 1782, he certainly did look upon them as final with regard to Ireland; but though they were then so understood, he would not say that they precluded the measure of a union, though he well remembered the words of the secretary of lord Carlisle, now a noble lord (Auckland), who said upon that occasion that it would be as easy to make the river Thames flow up Highgate Hill, as that England should continue to legislate for Ireland. Indeed, unless the measure met with the cordial concurrence of the Irish parliament, he feared that instead of extinguishing the animosities and divisions which distracted Ireland, and for which it was proposed as a remedy, it would tend to inflame and perpetuate them.

Lord *Morpeth* supported the measure of union as the only one that could correct the vices that were inherent in the Irish government—a government which never evinced any symptom of a liberal and enlarged policy, and which, from its contracted views and operations, was the principal cause of all the miseries under which Ireland laboured. As to the adjustment in 1782, it ever appeared to him as relating principally to commercial objects, and, though it seemed to have for its object the independent connexion between the two countries yet it contained evident proofs of its own imperfection in the resolutions that followed. The present situation of Ireland loudly called for the measure. Its separation from Great Britain was studiously laboured for by an enemy who was even more formidable from the poison of the doctrines which he circulated than from the force or terror of his arms; a poison which he had but too well succeeded in diffusing through the lowest ranks of the people of Ireland. The measure had nothing in it to humble the pride or encroach upon the interests and independence of Ireland, it was not a measure dictated by a selfish policy on the part of England, to subvert the independence of the Irish nation or of the Irish legislature; but was an open, fair, and liberal plan, concerted for the purpose of improving and consolidating the interests of the two countries. It originated in a principle of the most active benevolence, and enlarged policy. It would, if effected, extinguish all religious feuds, and party animosities and distinctions.

The *Solicitor General* said, that after what had fallen from those who had preceded him, he should not have thought it necessary to have risen, but for what had dropped from an hon. gentleman, who had, in his argument upon the competency of the Irish parliament, resorted to the sovereignty of the people. That doctrine had, he was aware, been lately propagated in those books which had deluged Europe; but the consequence of that principle was, that it led to anarchy and confusion. The principle upon which all governments stood, was this, that the people had delegated their power to the government, and that was the only organ by which their will could be known, or that they could do any thing by. He conceived, therefore, that as long as government continued to exist, it alone could act; and that any voice from the people, except as a voice of opinion, tended directly to subvert the power of government. If we resorted to practice, we should find that the parliament of England had frequently done, without blame, what the hon. gentleman had asserted they could not do — they had associated to themselves members from the county Palatines, from Wales, Durham, Newcastle, Berwick, and other places. They had introduced 45 members upon the Union with Scotland, and if the hon. gentleman's principles were admitted, they were usurpers, and had no right to sit, to vote, or legislate in that House. If such

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principles were admitted, the House could not alter the mode of election, vary the qualifications of electors, nor, in short do any thing which altered what had once been esteemed a constitutional point. Considering the nature of every government, they must possess the means of carrying into execution those measures, the expediency of which no man doubted. In the present case, setting aside the internal situation of Ireland, and considering only the relative situations of the two kingdoms, the expediency of a union would be manifest. What were their situations? They formed one empire; their language manners, and habits were the same; they were one people under one sovereign, having two localities! and from that circumstance alone, forming almost two states united by one common head, having, it was true, many bonds of connexion. It was well said in the other country, that the empire, in its present state, resembled a monster having two bodies, united under one head. In all the various governments which had existed in different periods of the world, there was not a similar example in history, unless the case of Scotland was to be considered such from the accession of James to the Union. The question therefore was, could it remain so without a danger of separation and dissolution? If we looked into the writers upon government, we should find that in all the complicated forms of government which the mind had suggested to them, such a state had never entered into their contemplation. In those states which those writers had called compounded states, as a necessary consequence, they always supposed that there must be a supreme legislature for the whole. Where several such states were united under one prince, and his will was law, they were then held together by his power, as he legislated for the whole of them. Invariably did such writers suppose an imperial legislation, for the whole of the empire in those compounded states. The empire was considered as a moral body, actuated, influenced, and governed by one spirit and will. If, however, as in the case of Ireland and England, it was governed by two spirits, it might chance not to preserve a unity of will, but diversity and discord on the contrary might take place. What was the case of the thirteen states of America? After the war they founded a federal union. This they soon found to be incompetent to the purposes of union, they therefore determined to form a general imperial legislation, which should decide for the whole body in matters of general concern, leaving the internal regulation of each state to its own assemblies. In pursuance of that resolution, they formed the congress of the United States, and this they did to secure justice for common defence, and for general welfare; for without such an assembly they found they could neither have justice nor security, nor enjoy the advantages of common defence and welfare. This was now done by wise and virtuous men, after mature deliberation and free debates, which were carried on with the greatest latitude of argument. It was also recommended by that great man general Washington, to give the power of war and peace, treaty and alliance, to some imperial legislative body, and it was carried into effect by their federal union. It was, however, felt in America that enough was not yet done; for it was found by experience, that although the general legislative power for the empire vested in congress, yet the power of internal regulation, which vested in the states, enabled any one of them to thwart the general plans if they were so disposed —Yet even this much did not exist between Great Britain and Ireland. Not even that power, insufficient as it was found to hold the United States together, did not exist between us and our sister kingdom. Every writer, reasoning upon such sort of governments had agreed, that such sort of connexion had a natural tendency to disunion and separation. If there was that tendency, it was necessary that there should be strong bonds of connexion to counteract that tendency: there were some such bonds; the crowns of both were upon the head of the same person; we were connected by language, manners, and laws, and by an identity of interest. But even from that a difficulty arose: for gentlemen must be aware of late years, that in constructing acts of parliament upon matters of general concern, it required great caution not to trench upon the independent province of the parliament of Ireland. It was true that they hitherto acted wisely and properly, in enacting similar provisions to those adopted previously in this country; but when it was recollected that the acts of Great Britain had no validity in Ireland, and that we were divided into two independent legislatures, it might hereafter happen that Ireland might adopt such measures only

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partially, or with difficulty, or even not at all. Nor would it stop here: it was a possible case that they might enact different regulations, and in points where the interests of the empire were materially concerned, the policy of this country might be defeated. Did not this alone show the necessity for some farther connexion between the countries, and for instituting some legislative unity of will? He had heard of the final adjustment of 1782, but those who insisted upon its being such, did not pay a very high compliment to the ministers of that day. One of them, not in the habit of attending that House, though a member, had himself told them, that he thought it necessary that something more should be done, and the measure of 1782 itself showed the necessity of some farther adjustment. If the subject was therefore viewed as to the relative situation of the two countries; as to the nature and principles of government in general; as to the measure of 1782; as to the consequences probable to result from two independent, perhaps discordant legislatures: —in all these points of view it fully proved the necessity of some measure of closer union, to form a uniform bill, and general legislation for imperial concerns. That being therefore so necessary, the consequence must be either to form a new imperial legislation, or to incorporate by a union with each other. The former measure he thought would be attended with great inconveniences and difficulties, not less perhaps than would arise from things remaining as they were, and it would not remove one part of the difficulty which was now felt by America, of a want of sufficient unity among the distinct members of the state, and when an internal government could at any time act so as to hazard a dissolution of the union.—If, therefore, there was nothing to be apprehended on the part of Ireland that they would be subjected to harsh and severe terms, it must be a measure highly advantageous for their interest, they having nothing more to do than to stipulate that they shall be admitted to all the privileges of subjects of the same empire, and to secure an equal treatment for themselves with the rest of the kingdom. On that head he would venture to quote the case of Scotland as decisive: she had never been treated with partiality, but had received the protection of the empire equally with any other part of it. He had heard it said that there were physical objections—that Ireland was separated from us by the sea: this he did not think an argument of much weight—It was as accessible as Scotland, especially from the northern parts of Scotland.—He had hitherto considered the question as to general principles, leaving it to be supposed that Ireland was well governed, and that there was nothing peculiar in the state of that country requiring any immediate remedy. If the measure could be shown to be so wise and desirable on those general grounds, how much more desirable would it appear when the actual state of that country was taken into the scale of examination! Those who wished to overturn that government had said of it, with some degree of truth, that it was provincial and not national—that it did not resemble the English government —that national objects were not pursued, but that the whole was conducted by a cabal. There was truth in the statement, and Ireland must be governed so while she remained in her present situation. The government now were afraid of the physical force of the country being turned against them. The large majority of the people were of different religions, though the bulk of the property lay the other way. If they were admitted into the legislation, the consequence would be, that having power, they would soon make property change hands; for to give men power and to suppose they would respect property, themselves having none, was to expect a degree of virtue which man did not possess. He did not mean to blame the persons in government there; situated as they were, they could not act otherwise. But how did this arise? It was not to be dissembled: Ireland knew her own history— he did not wish to speak harshly, but, in truth, Ireland must be considered as a conquered country. The English settlers first kept possession by force, and they formed the distinction between them and the natives. Afterwards the reformation came, and split them into religious sects. The Protestants had gained, and, by the assistance of England had hitherto maintained the ascendancy. Under such circumstances, Ireland was not, and could not be a well-governed kingdom. It was impossible for their government to act otherwise than they did. Upon these several considerations, therefore, he most clearly was convinced, that the measure proposed was the only remedy which could remove the evils that afflicted Ireland.

Colonel *Mark Wood* said:—Feeling as I

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do that the business now under consideration is not only of the first importance to Great Britain and Ireland, but that its consequences must ultimately affect the interests of every part of the globe, I should not think that I had faithfully discharged my duty, did I not endeavour to show upon what principles I have been induced to give it my unqualified support. The first and most material consideration which offers itself appears to be how far the legislative union of Great Britain and Ireland is necessary, and whether or not the security, prosperity, and existence of the two countries, is likely to be accomplished by any other measure, or by supporting as at present, two independent parliaments. The very able and clear historical account which you, Sir, gave us of the disorders that have subsisted in Ireland for upwards of two centuries past, but particularly since the period of the rebellion of my lord Mountjoye till the present day, are irrefragable proofs that a sufficient remedy has not yet been applied, and that whilst Great Britain, and many other parts of Europe, particularly Russia, have been making rapid strides, not merely towards civilization, but in the acquirement of every art and improvement which can adorn the human mind, the greatest and the richest parts of Ireland have continued in almost the same state of rude and uncivilized barbarism which they were in at that remote period. Is this to be attributed to any natural defect in the inhabitants of that country; or to what other cause is justly to be ascribed this extraordinary effect? You have already, Sir, so clearly resolved this question by calling to the attention of the House the many distinguished characters from that country, whether in literature, eloquence, or arms, that no farther illustration is necessary to convince us, that the cause of those deplorable disorders which have rendered that country, to which nature has been so bountiful, the horror and commiseration of other nations, is solely to be attributed to some radical defect of the government of that country, and that till such time as the cause can be removed, the effect must necessarily be the same. That the religious differences have had a considerable effect in perpetuating and keeping alive those unhappy distinctions between the inhabitants of the same country, both professing the same religion of christianity, although differing in the forms of worship, is but too true; and that although the Catholics outnumber the Protestants, at least four to one, yet that not only the greater part of the property, but government, is solely vested in the smaller number, and the Catholics have thereby been excluded from every sort of political consequence or power, may have kept up that degree of hatred and animosity which has so frequently broken out in acts of the greatest cruelty and atrocity, I do not believe can well be denied. But when I say that religious distinctions have been heretofore one of the chief causes of those dreadful disorders and murders committed in Ireland, I except from this general cause the late atrocious rebellion, in which both Catholic and Protestant appear to have buried their religious differences, to conspire against the connexion of Ireland and England, upon true Jacobinical principles, for the overthrow of every religious as well as political institution, and for the division and plunder of property. Could there exist any doubt in regard to the extensive traitorous conspiracy against the government, religion, and property of both countries, and that the leading feature of this conspiracy was, the total separation of Great Britain and Ireland, let him refer to the confessions of the principal traitors themselves, who have distinctly avowed, that Catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform were merely the cloak to cover their traitorous conspiracy against the government and connexion of the two countries. The trials at Maidstone, to which allusion was made the other night by an hon. gentleman, and the evidences given upon that occasion, have been to me a convincing proof, how very dangerous it is for men to connect themselves in political bonds, which have not for their basis the prosperity and advantage of their country; and how easy it is for men of the first talents and fortune to be led on beyond the bounds of prudence, to risk not only fortune but character in a desperate cause.—But, Sir, to revert more immediately to the subject—from the late unnatural union and connexion of Protestant and Catholic for the destruction of their country, I am rather inclined to doubt the reasonings of many respectable gentlemen, who would impute those disorders chiefly to the bigotry of the Catholics; some of whom confidently asserted, that the bigotry and ignorance of the Catholics was the same at present as it had been for centuries ago, and seemed to

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urge that strongly as a reason against the incompetency of a legislative union with such people in such a state. I say, Sir, I doubt much the fact asserted by an hon. gentleman, and would rather conclude, that the new philosophy of the French school had insinuated itself throughout the Irish as well as French Catholics, preparatory to sweeping away all religious as well as political distinctions, and to the introduction of that favourite theory of equality, the impracticability of which the French themselves have been the very first to demonstrate.—Under those circumstances, therefore, if I am right in my conclusion, the remedy which that hon. gentleman has proposed to apply, of re-enacting the penal laws against the Catholics, would, I fear, be attended with no good, but much evil, by keeping alive religious distinctions, which ought to be buried in oblivion, and which, under a good government, must of themselves gradually die away.—As many gentlemen have urged strongly the growing prosperity of Ireland since the year 1782, at the time when the parliament of Great Britain renounced every right of legislating for that country, and argued as if its increase in population, industry, commerce, and manufacture, were chiefly to be attributed to her having received at that period an independent resident legislature, let us consider how much or how little of that prosperity can justly be ascribed to that event; and in the consideration of which, it surely is no inconsiderable part of our subject, how far since that time Ireland has enjoyed those blessings attendant on so much internal improvement and prosperity. Since the year 1782, the increase of prosperity to every part of Great Britain, nay, to almost every part of the British dominions, has been equally conspicuous; and would it not be more reasonable to infer, that the prosperity of Ireland has arisen from the liberal and wise commercial advantages which Great Britain from that period conceded to the Irish, and which they still continue to enjoy? The chancellor of the exchequer has informed us, that in one article only (the linen manufacture), the restraining duties which the parliament of this country has laid upon the importation of this single article, amounts to upwards of 700,000*l.* annually; and exclusive of this sacrifice for the prosperity of the sister country, the laying open the trade to our colonies, as well as the other great demands made by Britain for the produce of the lands, may surely, without going any farther, satisfactorily account for the increase of their prosperity and population.—But with this increase of wealth, those gentlemen have entirely omitted to inform us how far, since the year 1782, this prosperity has brought with it to the people of Ireland that degree of tranquillity, civilization, and comfort, which is the sure test of the people having been wisely governed. It is, Sir, a melancholy truth, that no such blessings have been produced; that, on the contrary, the disorders of that unhappy country have risen to the greatest excesses. I ask those zealous advocates for parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation, and who still dwell upon that topic, notwithstanding the repeated confessions of the traitors themselves, that they had no such object in view, why they should, with such undoubted authority before them, wish to precede those traitors in their chief work, of destroying and levelling all sorts of religious establishments, as the surest means of accomplishing the remainder of their diabolical and wicked designs? For religious toleration and indulgence on every occasion, where such indulgences do not militate against the safety of the state, no person can be a greater advocate than I am; and if in any instance the established religion bears hard upon the rights and properties of the industrious part of the community, it surely would be just and wise, that on every such occasion the legislature of the country should adopt measures for effectual relief. The tithes in Ireland are a most severe exaction and check upon industry. I by no means impute to the established clergy those well-founded grievances and complaint; on the contrary, it proceeds from the original defect of the church establishment.—So much for Catholic emancipation, and by which I think it must be apparent, that unless by this is meant a total subversion of the constitution, it cannot convey any adequate idea of what is meant by the word. Emancipation from every grievance I am a zealous advocate for, and that their clergy should have, upon certain conditions, a respectable provision made for them; but if by emancipation be meant the pulling down of our own religious establishments to give way for another, I shall be as determined an opposer of measures having any such tendency.—From what I have stated, I

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think it must be obvious, that neither the present nor any former government in Ireland, is or has been adequate to give to the people of that country the degree of tranquillity, civilization, and improvement, not only essential for their own comfort and happiness, but to enable them to avail themselves of those numberless advantages which nature has so profusely bestowed on them. If, therefore, we be satisfied that the two separate legislative parliaments, so far from forming at present any bond of union to the two countries, is the most vulnerable point, can there be a more powerful argument to induce us, by every wise and prudent measure, to remedy those glaring defects in the separation of the legislatures of two countries, doomed by nature to rise and fall together, and who are already united in affection, language, and habits?—But, Sir, it has been asked, and very properly, in what manner gentlemen expect that a legislative union is likely to have this wonderful effect of removing all those disorders to which Ireland has been so long a victim, and of communicating to her a participation of those blessings which this happy country possesses? I do not say that a union will be accompanied with those immediate good consequences which is here expected; on the contrary, the changes to be effected upon the dispositions, habits, and prejudices of the people of Ireland, must be a work of time; but the opening of English markets upon a fair arrangement for all sorts of Irish produce and manufactures, the great influx of English capital, which must promote not only the improvement of the soil, in the various operations of husbandry, but in manufactures and commerce, must inevitably produce riches, comforts, and tranquillity to that unhappy country, and that by rapid means.

Mr. *Bankes* said, that Ireland was not in a state in which we could incorporate with her. Even if her parliament were favourable to the measure, it would not reconcile him to its policy. The remedy was not suited to the circumstances of Ireland. The government, the parliament, and a great part of the property of Ireland were firmly attached to this country; the mass of the population was unfortunately animated by different sentiments. The lower classes of the Catholics entertained a hostile mind against this country: nor did he see at all how this plan tended to give us security. If it was thought necessary to grant farther immunities to the Catholics, the parliament of Ireland was competent to do it; but he thought they had granted indulgencies to the Catholics at a time when the latter were not fitted to receive them. This was not the time to make a general relaxation of the Popery laws. It was due from a government to good subjects, to punish the bad. Some distinction should be made between those of the Catholics who had defended the government during the late crisis, and those who had not: the latter ought not to be allowed the indulgences granted in 1782; the former in proportion to their good behaviour ought to be admitted to the privileges enjoyed by the Protestants. There were many obstacles to a union in the relative situation of the two countries: it would be difficult to arrange a commercial intercourse, and to regulate the proportion of debt and taxes. He did not see too, how local matters, cabals, election deputies, &c. could be so well adjusted here as in a local parliament. He repeated, that the state of Ireland was not such as we could incorporate with. As to the great mass of the population, the country must be retained as a conquered country; nor was the union calculated to remedy the causes from which this necessity arose. He did not think the tie between the two countries so frail as to require this measure to render the connexion permanent.

Lord *Belgrave* said, he could admit that many of the evils lamented by his hon. friend existed in all their force, to disorganize and to destroy Ireland; but it was because those evils did exist, that he wished for a legislative union; that being the only means of saving Ireland. The settlement of 1782 was final for no other purpose but to stop the course of national prosperity: had the Irish accepted the commercial propositions, the nation would, by this time, have greatly benefited by the operation of the immunities they afforded.

The question being put, "That the said report be now brought up," the House divided:

Tellers.

YEAS	The Earl Temple - - Mr. Ryder - - - -	120
NOES	Mr. Hobhouse - - - Mr. Wilberforce Bird -	16

List of the Minority.

Bankes, Henry — Denison, W. J.

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Fitzpatrick, general	Russell, lord W.
Jefferys, N.	St. John, hon. St. A.
Jekyll, J.	Tierney, G.
Jones, T. T.	Wigley, J.
Laurence, Dr.	Wilson, R.
Lloyd, J. M.	TELLERS.
Milner, sir W.	Bird, W. W.
North, D.	Hobhouse, B.
Plumer, W.	

Mr. Douglas accordingly delivered the Resolutions in at the clerk's table. They were then agreed to by the House, with some amendments, and earl Temple was ordered to communicate them to the Lords at a conference.—The said Resolutions were as follow:

RESOLUTIONS.

1. "Resolved, That in order to promote and secure the essential interests of Great Britain and Ireland, and to consolidate the strength, power, and resources of the British empire, it will be advisable to concur in such measures as may best tend to unite the two kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland into one kingdom, in such manner, and on such terms and conditions, as may be established by acts of the respective parliaments of his majesty's said kingdoms.

2. "That it would be fit to propose, as the first article, to serve as a basis of the said union, that the said kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland shall upon a day to be agreed upon, be united into one kingdom, by the name of, "The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland."

3. "That for the same purpose it would be fit to propose, That the succession to the monarchy and the imperial crown of the said united kingdom shall continue limited, and settled in the same manner as the imperial crown of the said kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland now stands limited and settled, according to the existing laws, and to the terms of the union between England and Scotland.

4. "That for the same purpose it would be fit to propose, That the said united kingdom be represented in one and the same parliament, to be styled "The Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland;" and that such a number of Lords spiritual and temporal, and such a number of members in the House of Commons, as shall be hereafter agreed upon by acts of the respective parliaments as aforesaid, shall sit and vote in the said parliament on the part of Ireland and shall be summoned, chosen, and returned in such manner as shall be fixed by an act of parliament of Ireland previous to the said union, and that every member hereafter to sit and vote in the said parliament of the united kingdom, shall, until the said parliament shall otherwise provide, take, and subscribe the same oaths, and make the same declarations, as are by law required to be taken, subscribed and made, by the members of the parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland.

5. "That for the same purpose it would be fit to propose, That the churches of that part of Great Britain called England, and of that part of Great Britain called Scotland, and of Ireland, and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government thereof, shall be preserved as now by law established.

6. "That for the same purpose it would be fit to propose, That his majesty's subjects in Ireland shall at all times hereafter be entitled to the same privileges, and be on the same footing, in respect of trade and navigation, in all ports and places belonging to Great Britain, and in all cases with respect to which treaties shall be made by his majesty, his heirs or successors, with any foreign power, as his majesty's subjects in Great Britain:—That no duty shall be imposed on the import and export between Great Britain and Ireland of any articles now duty free; and that on other articles there shall be established, for a time to be limited, such a moderate rate of equal duties as shall, previous to the union, be agreed upon and approved by the respective parliaments, subject, after the expiration of such limited time, to be diminished equally with respect to both kingdoms, but in no case to be increased; that all articles which may at any time hereafter be imported into Great Britain from foreign parts, shall be importable through either kingdom into the other, subject to the like duties and regulations as if the same were imported directly from foreign parts; that where any articles, the growth, produce, or manufacture of either kingdom, are subject to any internal duty in one kingdom, such countervailing duties (over and above any duties on import to be fixed as aforesaid) shall be imposed, as shall be necessary to prevent any inequality in that respect; and that all other matters of trade and commerce other than the foregoing, and than such others as may before the union be specially agreed upon for the due encouragement of the agriculture and manufactures of the respective kingdoms, shall remain to be regulated from time to time by the united parliament.

7. "That for the same purpose it would be fit to propose that the charge arising from the payment of the interest or sinking fund for the reduction of the principal of the debt incurred in either kingdom before the union, shall continue to be separately defrayed by Great Britain and Ireland respectively. That for a number of years to be limited, the future expenses of the united kingdom, in peace or war, shall be defrayed by Great Britain and Ireland jointly, according to such proportions as shall be established by the respective parliaments previous to the union; and that after the expiration of the time to be so limited, the mode of jointly defraying such expenses shall be regulated according to such rules and principles as shall be in like manner

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agreed upon previous to the union, for the purpose of establishing gradually a uniform system of taxation through every part of the united kingdom:

8. "That for the same purpose it would be fit to propose that all laws in force at the time of the union, and all the courts of civil or ecclesiastical jurisdiction within the respective kingdoms shall remain as now by law established within the same, subject only to such alterations or regulations from time to time as circumstances may appear to the parliament of the united kingdom to require."

The above Resolutions being communicated to the Lords at a conference, were, on the 18th, read by the clerk at the table, and ordered to be printed, and to be taken into consideration on that day se'nnight.

Petition of Colonel Despard.] Feb. 25. Mr. *Courtenay* presented a petition from Edward Marcus Despard; setting forth, "That since the 22nd of April last, the petitioner has been confined close prisoner in the House of Correction, Cold-bath-fields, under a warrant from his grace the duke of Portland: that, until the 25th of November last, the petitioner was confined in a damp cell, not seven feet square: that said cell had no article of furniture, except a bed, laid on some oaken planks, fastened to the wall: that, during the first six weeks of his imprisonment, the petitioner had no allowance but bread and water: and the petitioner further begs leave humbly to state that he never has been allowed to set his foot in the garden of said prison, though his health has been materially injured by his confinement: and the petitioner humbly begs leave to state to the House, that he verily believes it to be an unusual thing, in this country, to confine a state prisoner to a penitentiary house, however proper it may be for convicted persons or vagrants: and the petitioner humbly begs leave further to state, that the hon. Val. Lawless, John Reeves, esq. and John Jackson, esq. can give evidence of the facts mentioned in this petition: and the petitioner humbly begs leave farther to state, that the affairs of his family are entirely ruined by his long confinement: the petitioner therefore humbly prays to be examined, at the bar of the House, touching the matters aforesaid; and that the House will be pleased to take his case into consideration, and afford such relief, as to the House in its wisdom shall seem meet."

Ordered to lie upon the table.

Mr. Abbot's Motion for a Committee on the Expiring Laws.] March 1. Mr. *Abbot*, in rising to move for the appointment of the annual committee on expired and expiring laws, said, that he wished to take this opportunity of submitting to the House the propriety of some special directions, which it might be fit for the committee to observe in the course of its proceedings, for the purpose of attaining more effectually the objects for which it was to be appointed:—It appeared to have been the usage of parliament in former times, and more especially within the present century, in making new laws upon matters of a novel nature or of doubtful policy, to limit them in the first instance to some short period of duration, in order that those laws might of necessity come back for re-consideration after some experience of their effects. This practice was in itself wise and beneficial; but it had also led to a multiplicity and accumulation of laws which was scarcely to be conceived by those who had not adverted to the subject; for not only in progress of time new circumstances had called for new laws of a temporary sort; but the former also, which ought, after a reasonable experience, to have been finally rejected or made perpetual, have continued to swell the mass, till we have found at present nearly 200 temporary acts of parliament passed within the present century, and still in force as such, —continued in some instances by not less than fourteen or fifteen successive renewals, and producing a farther series of subsidiary acts, which added to the former, amounted nearly to 600—all of them falling within this general description. Out of this multiplicity many evils had resulted; and besides the general risk which this confusion must bring upon those who were to advise, and those who were to act upon that advice in the daily occurrences of life, several of the most important interests of the country, as they affected the safety of the state, or the rights of individuals, had been occasionally put into the greatest jeopardy, and some of them had actually suffered irreparable injury. Thus, the power of the crown to summon parliament, and call out the militia upon any sudden occurrence of rebellion or invasion, a power happily created in the present reign, and which in 1794 was found to be of the utmost constitutional importance, was accidentally suffered to expire at the end of the term for which it was first enacted, and the country, for an

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interval of some years, was deprived of this valuable safeguard and protection. The trading interests which are deeply concerned in the laws of bankruptcy and insolvency have repeatedly suffered by the expiration of acts of this nature, as the courts of Westminster-hall well know by the long litigations which have arisen out of those interruptions of the system; and even the principal statute of the whole bankrupt's code was within a few days, or rather a few hours, of its termination at the close of the last parliament, when almost by accident it was taken up, and the current of law upon these subjects preserved its former channel.—Mischiefs of the same nature, but of still more serious consequences, had affected even the administration of criminal justice. In some cases this confusion and uncertainty had thrown impediments in the way of prosecutions for state offences; and in other cases, criminal convicts have been made to undergo severities in the execution of their sentences upon the supposed authority of laws which in fact had long ceased to have any existence.—It was hardly necessary to ask the House whether these things were fit so to remain—or whether being apprized of these evils, it did not become the duty of the House to guard against them effectually, and prevent their recurrence in future. The remedy at the same time was obvious, and its effects would be complete,—if the House, in appointing this annual committee, would always direct it to report a statement of all the public general laws whatever which had actually expired, or were about to expire within fixed and reasonable limits of time, taken retrospectively as well as prospectively; and comprehending, not only those which were running out in the course of the actual session, but those also which might terminate in the course of the ensuing session; for the sake of bringing into notice such even as were approaching to their end, and the renewal of which might require previous investigation and research, as had recently been found to be necessary in the instances of the distilleries, fisheries, &c. The committee should also be required to report a distinct opinion upon the expediency of reviving, continuing, or making perpetual each of those acts respectively. By resuming this course of proceeding in every session, the House would gradually advance towards a great and general improvement in the whole system of the statute law. He then moved, "That a committee be appointed to inquire, what public general laws have expired within twelve months preceding the commencement of the present session of parliament, and also what laws are about to expire within twelve months subsequent to the commencement of the present session, or in the course of the next session, or at the end thereof: and to report the same from time to time to the House, with their opinion which of them are fit to be revived, continued, or made perpetual."

The motion was agreed to, and a committee appointed.

The King's Message respecting the Princes Edward and Ernest Augustus, and the Princess Amelia.] March 1. Mr. Pitt presented the following Message from his Majesty:

"GEORGE *R.*

"His majesty being desirous of making competent provisions for the honourable support and maintenance of his dearly beloved sons, prince Edward and prince Ernest Augustus, which the monies applicable to the purposes of his majesty's civil government would be insufficient to defray; and being also desirous of being able to extend to his beloved daughter the princess Amelia, the provision which he has been enabled to make out of the hereditary revenue for the other branches of his royal family; desires the assistance of parliament for this purpose; and his majesty relies on the affection of his faithful Commons that they will make such provision as the circumstances of the case may appear to require. G. *R.*"

Debate on Mr. Wilberforce's Motion for the Abolition of the Slave Trade.] March 1. Mr. *Wilberforce* said, he had so often called the attention of the House to this subject, that he should think it would be putting both himself and the House to a great deal of unnecessary trouble if he were to repeat all the arguments he had used upon former occasions. It was just twelve years since he first pointed out to the House the evils that attached to the African Slave trade. At that time he was listened to with attention, and the House seemed to be impressed with a sense of the injustice of that odious traffic; but, if he was listened to with attention—if the topic was found interesting, he was much afraid that it was owing to the novelty of the discussion. Such, indeed,

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was the only inference that could be drawn from the result of the various discussions which had taken place in that House, notwithstanding all the facts that had been brought forward, all the proofs which the friends of the abolition had adduced, after days, months, nay years, of patient and laborious investigation. Facts, indeed, had been brought forward, the truth of which no obstinacy could resist, and in 1791 the House was at last shaken from its attachment to this traffic; but it was with the members of that House as with most other persons—when such terrible things were mentioned, they could scarcely believe their own eyes and ears. Surprised that such practices existed, there was then no difference of opinion as to the great question of at last completely abolishing the trade. Whatever difference of opinion had prevailed in the House respecting the time most proper for the abolition to take place, there certainly was then but one opinion, with the exception of three or four persons, as to the justice and necessity of the measure. Those who opposed an immediate abolition allowed that it ought to be carried into effect as soon as it could be rendered compatible with the interest of the West India proprietors, that was, as soon as the number of slaves necessary for keeping up the stock then in the Islands should be imported. The number then mentioned as necessary for this purpose was as much beneath the number which had since been imported, as the period to which the trade had extended exceeded that which its warmest friends would at that time have assigned to it. The traffic was to have been put an end to in the year 1796. That period arrived, and what was done? The House had thought better, not of their former reasoning on the subject, not of the truth, not of the facts of the case, for these remained the same; but they had thought better of their own resolution; they had thought better of the interest of the West India traders, and had departed from the resolution to which they were solemnly pledged.

In such a situation he could not be expected to entertain great hopes of success from the motion he intended to make. In nearly the fourth year after the period allotted for the abolition, he saw less appearance of that event being brought about by the House than at any time previous to their passing the resolution he had alluded to. He now felt himself as standing in a situation much more backward with regard to the attainment of the object he had in view, than on the day when he first proposed it to the House. He considered it as most blameable for the House to depart from the resolution they had adopted to give up the abolition of slavery, which was their own business, and to put it into the hands of the West Indian colonial assemblies. It was almost impossible that the consequences could have been any other than what they had been. Some gentlemen, it appeared, had been duped into an acquiescence in the measure, which induced the House to depart from their resolution: they had been induced to think, that the colonial assemblies would bring about all the change that could be advantageously operated in the condition of the blacks: but if some gentlemen had been duped, those had not who had declared that every acre of land uncultivated in our West India islands should be brought into cultivation before the importation of slaves from Africa was put an end to. It was, however, allowed on all hands, that the slaves ought to be well treated; and it was conceived that the regulations drawn up by the colonial assemblies would answer this end. He should just remind the House of the arguments he had so frequently used upon this subject. The principles he had laid down were fixed and unalterable; they belonged to human nature, and it was impossible to be deceived in reasoning upon them. He had observed, that the colonial assemblies neither could nor would abolish the slave trade. The means, therefore, which was now employed was not proportionate to the end. Was it to be supposed, that the West India gentlemen would act as spies upon the conduct of each other; that they would make minute inquiries into the mode in which negroes not their own were clothed or fed, and pry into all the domestic management of their neighbours? It was evident that until the whole of the land should be cultivated in these islands, the proprietors would be hostile to the abolition. They persevered in importing slaves from Africa, and this not so much to replace those who died, as for the purpose of forming new colonies in districts formerly uncultivated. The idea of delaying the abolition until the whole of our colonies should be cultivated was one of the most extravagant ever suggested. In 1788 there were only

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700,000 acres in a state of cultivation, and there remained between two and three millions to be cultivated. It would appear then, that the number which, upon this principle, must be imported, was such as would be necessary to bring into a state of cultivation a quantity of land three times greater than that which was at present productive. It was evident that no system of colonial legislation, no examination into the domestic management of the negroes could secure this supply from the stock in the islands. But he would again ask whether any good was to be expected from regulations, the execution of which depended upon a practice of this kind? He had heard it observed, that in no countries were ideas of liberty carried to a higher degree than in those in which slavery existed. He did not mean to dispute this axiom, but those who maintained it ought to show how it was possible to suppose, that in such a country the examination of domestic concerns would be submitted to. In this country great reluctance had always been testified to submit to any thing like an examination of domestic economy: but the measure which the colonial regulations tended to enforce must appear much more odious than any excise, since it was far more general in its operation. Common sense, therefore, would show the absurdity of relying upon any good from regulations of this kind. It would appear then, that he was actuated by no illiberal spirit when he stated that the gentlemen of the West India islands would not submit to the system proposed. It certainly would require strong motives to induce men to submit to regulations of so odious a kind. Now in this case was it any thing which the colonial planters desired themselves that was to prevail upon them to adopt the regulations? On the contrary these regulations tended to promote what they regarded as the greatest evil that could possibly befal them. If the House would consider these things, they would be convinced, that it was impossible the event they looked for could result from the system adopted by the colonial legislatures.

But it had been shown by the friends of the abolition, that every object, with regard to the domestic comfort of the negroes, that could possibly be obtained in consequence of any measures adopted in the colonial assemblies, would be more effectually attained by the abolition of the slave trade: indeed, the impracticability of obtaining any thing like an amelioration in the condition of the slaves upon the present system was so obvious as scarcely to require illustration. What would the people of this country say if similar regulations were proposed here with regard to horses? And a horse bore nearly the same relation to its master here that a slave did to his master in the West Indies. Were it proposed to regulate the quantity of food a horse should receive, the labour he should perform, the degree of correction he should receive, would not the masters of the horses resist such a regulation? and could it be expected that they would sincerely obey it even if it received legislative authority? They would very naturally say, that different horses had different constitutions, and required different quantities of food and different degrees of correction. All regulations were vain unless there was produced an identity of interest between the master and the servant. A powerful motive ought to be given to the master for keeping up the number of his slaves without importation: were this the case, their treatment would not be left to the uncertain workings of humanity in an agent, but the master residing on the spot would find that it was not so much his interest to produce a certain quantity of sugar, as to preserve the health of his labourers, and encourage their industry by acts of benevolence and justice. It had been said, that the situation of the slaves had been lately much mended: he granted that this might be the case, but he would contend, that any amelioration which might have taken place with regard to them was partial and uncertain, and chiefly arose from the attention of that House having been called to the subject. This would appear from the accounts of the progress made in improving the state of the negroes in our colonies. His right hon. friend (Mr. Dundas) had produced some papers upon that subject; but there was nothing contained in those documents that could induce him to alter his opinion. He had, however, the satisfaction to think, that if there were any who still persisted in the opinion, that the great object they had in view could be accomplished by any local regulations in the colonies, they would now be convinced of their error. Those who had formerly voted against it could not avoid being convinced that there was no longer any ground for supposing, that the advantages

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they once expected to result from the colonial regulations could ever be procured. But the colonial assemblies had never pretended that they wished to abolish the Slave trade; on the contrary, the assembly of Jamaica had, with a great deal of candour declared that they would take no measure for the abolition of the Slave trade, and that it ought to be carried on so long as there was an acre of uncultivated land in Jamaica. Now what was the consequence of this resolution? The number of cultivatable acres in that island was stated to be 3,500,000; of these 820,000 were at present in a state of cultivation; so that there remained to be cultivated about 2,680,000. Now, if slaves were to be imported until this ground was cultivated, the prospect of the abolition of slavery would be placed at an immense distance indeed, if the future progress of cultivation in these islands might be compared with what they had hitherto done, the Slave trade must be carried on about 300 years longer; and supposing the same mortality to prevail, the number of slaves that would be wanted would be 2,400,000. He should read a passage from one of the statutes of the assembly of Jamaica, in which the assembly stated their willingness to promote improvements in the condition of the slaves, by securing to them "the certain, immediate, and active protection of the law." These words, it would however, be recollected, were not the assembly's own: they were borrowed from the words of the address of the House on this subject. They were words which had nothing to do with a state of slavery. The assembly had, however, added words which were not suggested by the address. They had added, "that they would grant them this protection in proportion as they improved in religion and morals." Now, this assertion that they would grant to the slaves the certain, immediate, and active protection of the law, showed in what light they must have been considered before the passing of this statute. There certainly never was a more clear distinction made between freedom and slavery. It was also to be observed, that the assembly stated that they were induced to make these improvements in the condition of the slaves solely from motives of humanity, and not with any view to promote the abolition of the Slave trade, which they were of opinion, ought to continue until every acre of uncultivated land in Jamaica was rendered productive. In the address from the assembly to the throne, they asserted their right to procure labourers (they did not call them slaves) from Africa—a right which they declared was secured to them by several acts of parliament and royal proclamations; and they insisted that his majesty's promise should remain inviolate so long as they preserved their allegiance.

He had heard it stated, as an argument against putting an end to the Slave trade, that if this country had abolished it, the colonies would carry it on: he did not hesitate to deny the right of any British subject to carry on such a traffic, after it should be declared illegal by parliament; but this reason was directly contrary to what the assembly of Jamaica had stated upon the subject. He recollected a singular passage, in an address of the assembly of Jamaica, presented about two years ago. Gentlemen would certainly think them a sturdy set of people if they maintained the doctrine alluded to, after what they had stated in that address. They there laid all the blame of the Slave trade on this country, and declared that they would have nothing to do with it if we abandoned it. They hired the labourers, as they called them, that were brought from Africa, but they had nothing to do with the means by which they were procured. Now, what construction could be put upon this language but this, that our West India colonies said to this country "We have the profit of this horrible traffic, but the guilt and the shame are all yours?" They would seem to insinuate, that it was not understood in Great Britain to whom the blame ought to attach, and they informed us, that the traffic was entirely British, carried on in British ships, and by British property. Thus then, they applied this salvo to their conscience, that they only bought what we sold: they acknowledged that they had the largest share of the profit, but they disavowed all the guilt and all the shame that belong to the diabolical commerce.—An hon. gentleman (Mr. B. Edwards) had stated, that there would be a great willingness in the West India merchants to act upon some certain general principle which would produce the gradual abolition of the trade. No plan of the kind had, however, been brought forward. Since this question was first agitated, immense numbers of unfor-

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tunate beings have been carried to the West Indies, not for the purposes for which it was pretended they were wanted, but for cultivating new lands and forming new colonies. Since the measure of abolition had been in agitation, regulations had been adopted by the West India planters, that had put a stop to the mortality, which made such extensive havock among that unfortunate race. Regulations of the same nature had been adopted at a much earlier period in America, Bencoolen and other places, where they continued to increase without any additional supply from Africa. There did not indeed appear to be any reason why the negroes should not increase in a climate where the Caribbs and the Maroons had increased. If the House had assented to the continuation, solely to improve the population of the West India islands, their purpose was effected. The negroes were found to multiply there as rapidly as on their native soil, under the influence of a mild and humane treatment.

It had been too much the practice to consider the question merely as it affected the West India islands, without at all taking into view the effects which the traffic produced in the extensive regions whence its unfortunate victims were transported. The object which he would particularly hold up to view was, the vast continent of Africa. He had heard much of the misery and desolation which it had spread through the whole extent of that ill-fated country, and every information he could collect tended to eke out the melancholy tale with circumstances of additional horror. There it was that this infernal traffic exposed itself in its real deformity, where its effects had been to arm chieftain against chieftain, to propagate external war and intestine broil from generation to generation, to perpetuate every species of individual outrage and depredation, and to taint even the very administration of justice. He had formerly shown, that the most copious source of negro slavery was, the accusation of witchcraft, a crime which had no other reality than that of swelling the number of its victims. All the miseries which he had depicted on former occasions, were confirmed by every circumstance which had since come to his knowledge. Civilization generally made the greatest advances on the coasts of all countries. But it seemed to be the peculiar nature of this detested trade, to reverse principles which had been deemed the most unalterable, and to contradict every conclusion that had been drawn from the most extensive experience. If they visited any part of the African coast, for a track of more than 3,500 miles, they would behold nothing but wretchedness and barrenness—moral barrenness, and mental and physical degradation; they would find that the sole effect of their intercourse with Europeans had been to unite the vices of polished society with the ignorance and ferocity of the rudest barbarism. But if they went into the interior, where, probably, the face of a white man had never before been seen, though they would, indeed, have even there to lament the contagious mischiefs of that intercourse; yet, comparatively, it would be found in a state of tranquillity and happiness. They were united into great cities, had schools, men of letters, beasts of burden, and were advanced two or three hundred years in knowledge and civilization beyond those who were in habits of intercourse with British merchants. These facts proclaimed our shame, in language too plain to be misunderstood.—If ever there was a period when the House ought, more than at any other, to dread the continuance of this traffic, that period was the present. This country was engaged in a great and a difficult contest, with a nation distinguished by its deviations from the path of humanity and virtue. It was our duty to exhibit a different example to the world, and to prove that we were actuated by principles of a nobler kind. That nation, however, which was stained with so many crimes, had, in one instance, advanced a step before us in the cause of humanity, and had put an end to this abominable traffic.

The safety of the country demanded that this iniquitous commerce should exist no longer. Vice and immorality never produced prosperity and happiness. Misery was invariably the attendant on guilt. The House would do well to consider, how many human beings they would have saved from destruction, if they had put a stop to the Slave trade when he first moved its abolition. Even since the business had been referred to the colonial legislature, about 200,000 slaves had been imported. This increased the great disproportion between the whites and the blacks in the colonies, and threatened the most dangerous consequences. In the neighbourhood of the British islands there

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existed a colony of free blacks. The population of this colony was greater than that of all the British put together. He trusted the House would reflect on what might be the consequences of this example held out to the negroes of the other islands, by this free colony in the midst of them, where the blacks were really employed as labourers. Would they allow this to go on, and still persist in saying that the blacks were incapable of improvement? There still was time to avert the dreadful mischief which the system of importation threatened to the West India islands. If that system was still pursued, he should regard the ruin of these colonies as sealed. To those who dwelt upon the regulations of the colonial assemblies, he recommended the reading of the Code Noire of France, established 100 years ago: they would there find, that the directions for the management of the slaves were as full as those now brought forward. If they were not satisfied with this, let them look into the Spanish code, and they would read this direction in it—"That if any slave should have saved enough to purchase his freedom, he might claim his manumission; and if his master should ask an unreasonable price, he might appeal to two persons, who should act as appraisers, and set a value upon him." Let them look also at the Directorio of Portugal. He had never been one who had given into the practice of charging the West India gentlemen with cruelty. The great point which he had pressed was, that there was a vast continent, which this trade degraded, desolated, and laid waste. He would say therefore to the House—"No longer injure your name by suffering this to continue: we show you that you may put an end to it safely, and that you ought to do it." It was with a heavy heart he had brought the subject forward; argument, exposure, and proof, could do nothing more; for argument, exposure, and proof, had all been produced, and had failed. It remained to be seen, whether gentlemen having stated, that they only resisted the abolition, because they expected the islands would abolish it themselves, would now state that as a reason, after they had heard the answer of the assembly of Jamaica. He should conclude by making his usual motion—"That leave be given to bring in a bill for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, at a time to be limited."

The question being put, "That this House do now resolve itself into a committee of the whole House, to consider of that motion,"

Sir *W. Young* asked, if it was necessary, in discussing the question, whether the Slave trade should be abolished, to bring forward the Code Noire, enacted under the despotism of France, benevolent as the letter of that code might be, in order to contrast it with the free enactments of the British colonial legislatures in favour of the slaves? What was the tendency of such a comparison? To represent the colonial legislatures, acting under the free constitution of Great Britain, as doing less in favour of the slaves than the despotism of France; to hold out the benevolence and policy of those colonial assemblies as matter of discontent to the very negroes who had been the objects of their benevolence and humane institutions. The mischief was obvious and fatal. He read a letter which he had received from a friend in the West Indies, who stated, that the effect of the language used by certain gentlemen, would be to deluge the islands with blood, and that the minds of the slaves were already inflamed with French principles. What, then, must be the effect which a repetition of such language would have on such men? Here sir William vindicated the conduct of the colonial assemblies in general, and instanced Tobago, as an island once in the possession of France, but which had returned to the dominion of England at the commencement of the present war, in consequence of the difference of treatment to the blacks, who had been entrusted with arms, and had joined their masters in driving out the French. He alluded to the candid manner in which the motion was brought forward in 1797, and looked for the best effects from the measures which had subsequently been taken. The general assembly of St. Kitt's had declared their hope that the trade might ultimately be put a stop to. With respect to the state of education among the slaves, the effect of the exertions of the colonial assemblies had been to make many good christians among the blacks—a circumstance at which the hon. gentleman would surely rejoice. In the island of Grenada a revolt of the negroes had only lately been suppressed, and therefore it was considered dangerous at once to make great reforms. St. Vincent's equally wished to ameliorate the condition of the

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slaves, and only the absence of its governor had occasioned any delay. He insisted that strictly the connexion was such as that between a master and a labourer, not between a slave and a planter. Barbadoes and Dominica had shown the same zeal. For the last eleven years his opinion had been that the trade had ill effects, but that the best mode of removing them would be by a gradual abolition. We had consuls at Algiers, Tunis, &c. and he thought the hardships of the middle passage might be mitigated by appointing consuls on the coast of Africa. He would agree to a gradual abolition; but he could not consent suddenly to change all the property of the West Indies, and to convert their revenues into mere life annuities. He wished the House to consider the value of Jamaica, and the loss which must arise to the parent country if all security for property were loosened by the immediate abolition of the trade, and the emancipation of the negroes. Let the House consider existing circumstances—an army of blacks under Toussaint in a neighbouring island, and French principles struggling to find their way into the very heart of our colonies. It had been alleged, that the effect of this sort of slavery on the human mind was, to extinguish intellect; but Macrobius observes, that Zeno, and some of the greatest philosophers of Greece, were slaves.

Mr. *Petrie* said, he held in his hand a resolution passed by the assembly of Tobago, which declared it to be the wish of that colony to promote population among the slaves, and to make them attached to trade, &c. He knew a gentleman who had lived as a governor on the coast of Africa for twenty years from whence he removed to Tobago: having lived in a patriarchal manner, his slaves were all attached to him, and voluntarily went along with him. Whenever one of them committed a fault, he had him tried by a jury of other slaves; a system productive of the most beneficial effects; for when the enemy attacked Tobago, that island was saved by means of this gentleman's slaves having voluntarily taken up arms in defence of their master's property. The abolition of the slave trade would be the scourge of Africa; as a planter, he wished it to take place; but as a cosmopolite, he desired its continuance out of humanity to the inhabitants of the coast of Africa.

Mr. *Dent* said, that while gentlemen were deploring the fate of African slaves, they seemed not to be aware, that from three to four thousand men were annually exported from Ireland to the Carolinas, under articles, binding them to temporary servitude. The negroes in our islands had nothing to complain of, and their situation was more likely to be deteriorated, than improved by certain speeches made in that House. The measure of abolition was a bad one, and the hon. mover was not warranted in many of his observations adduced in its support. The argument drawn from the paucity of inhabitants on the African coast had no weight, while it remained unproved that they were not better disposed of in the colonies than in those cities in the interior where they had books—what kind of books had not been stated! While protection was afforded them in the West Indies, allegiance would follow. It would be unjust towards those who were encouraged to cultivate the colonial wastes, to deprive them of the means. The negroes enjoyed complete protection, and their property was better secured than our own, for they paid no taxes. He objected also to the time of bringing the motion forward: every thing had been done to supersede its necessity. The merchants of Liverpool, in particular, had anticipated the most sanguine wishes. In the size of the ships, the number of slaves, and in the regulations for their accommodation during the middle passage nothing had been omitted.

Sir *Ralph Milbank* said, that the slave trade was a system of cruelty and oppression, and its practice unworthy of a free nation. There might be a great deal of individual merit concerned in it, but he could not conceive how any Englishman could hesitate to abolish a traffic so contrary to every principle of liberty.

Mr. *Sewell* said:—Sir, I confess I should have thought that the question which the House would have been called upon this night to decide, consistently at least, with its own proceedings, would have been, whether the papers on your table do or do not evince, on the part of the colonies, a concurrence in the principle of the resolution of April 1797, and a suitable disposition to move in the course which that resolution proposes; I had imagined that the hon. mover would, in decency to the declared sense of the House, have discussed the subject of to-night on that ground. But instead of so doing, he has set out at once with a broad,

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unqualified, avowal, that the colonial legislatures can do nothing that will satisfy him; that whatever acts they may pass, whatever improvements they may attempt, all amount to nothing; and, that nothing but abolishing the trade by this country will do. The hon. gentleman insists that the colonial assemblies are not in earnest, and never were. Jamaica, he says, has not dissembled, but has acted with manliness. He has availed himself of a passage in the address from the assembly of Jamaica to the king, to assert that that island will hear of nothing that may lead to a termination of the slave trade. But the passage he refers to admits of another interpretation. The assembly declares its motive in passing the two acts which appear among the papers before the House; and it declares also its right. It declares, that in passing those acts it is actuated by humanity, and not with any view to the termination of the slave trade. Will the House deny to that assembly the justice they owe to themselves of acting upon a principle of humanity, uninfluenced by any fear lest the Slave trade should terminate if they did otherwise? Must that assembly be necessarily averse to terminate the Slave trade in any manner, or by any means, because they are indifferent to the annual threats of the hon. gentleman to destroy it at a blow? If they are actuated by humanity, they are actuated by that which must terminate the trade in the end. Where, then, is the evidence of their aversion? No, Sir, the assembly are not likely to be averse to terminate the trade, if it can be done by superseding its necessity; but they will be humane, whether the trade shall terminate or no; and this is a fair exposition of that address.—But it is said they follow up this declaration with a claim of right. They do so. But what is that right? It is a right to cultivate the lands you have invited and encouraged them to settle. I do not, however, nor ever did, assert a right to the trade until "every cultivatable acre in the islands" shall be cultivated; but until every acre which has been granted by the crown, for the purpose of settling, shall be settled, I do assert a right in the colonists as against this country to the means of settling them, and to every species of means that may be necessary. If the Slave trade is the necessary means, the Slave trade, while the necessity continues, is their right. Let the necessity be removed; let their patented lands be settled and full handed; and let their negro population increase and multiply by natural reproduction; and you may cease, perhaps, to hear of this claim. Is this inconsistent with every termination of the Slave trade? It cannot be. But is it on declarations merely that the hon. gentleman who considers the assembly of Jamaica as having resisted the resolution of April 1797, would rely. To the opinions he has expressed I will oppose, not the declarations of the assembly of Jamaica, but their acts and deeds. Do they resist what their statute-book promotes? Is not the act they have passed to prevent the introduction of aged negroes, a statutable proscription of habitual wickedness and irregularity, an immediate check to established and destructive prejudices, and a furtherance of natural population within the colony? Have not the liberal provision they have granted, and the duties they have prescribed to their clergy, a direct tendency to the moral and religious improvement of their negroes? If, then, the islands are manifesting a desire to do that which the resolution of 1797 recommends, will the House decree their ruin because they have done no more?—Let us even suppose, however, that the colonial assemblies had done less than they have, must the Slave trade therefore be abolished? The hon. gentleman has said to my great surprise, that this is the precise moment for it. What would be the probable effects of such abolition? Externally considered, that trade which is now conducted by ourselves would be transferred to other nations; and what is now legitimate, would become contraband. The traffic would not cease; it would continue with a variation only of the country which would benefit by it, and of the mode in which it would be carried on; with the removal no doubt, of great capitals to other countries where the trade would still prevail. As to its internal operation, what must follow? The immediate abandonment of many estates and settlements: the emigration of the most numerous class of white inhabitants; the speedy diminution of the strength and security of the colonies; the certain ruin of families; and the necessary reduction of those abundant resources which are daily drawn from thence into the mother country. Is the present state of things in the West Indies such as to encourage experiments? The hon. gentleman says that this is the precise moment for it, and he recommends

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an immediate "coalescence" with St. Domingo. I am astonished at such an expression. I do not know what gentlemen, who concern themselves for other islands, may think of their situation; but as for that of Jamaica, within thirty leagues of an emancipated colony, where insurrection and revolt, murder, assassination, and horror, give the example to their neighbours, it is at this moment most perilous. What sort of coalescence does the hon. gentleman mean? Can he mean any thing else than to recommend an emancipation from slavery in Jamaica? Sir, the hon. gentleman's provocations have already been great; but in this his last attempt at revolutionary coalescence, his impatience hazards what I must believe his judgment and humanity would be ashamed of. The hon. gentleman has adverted to the many hundred thousands of negroes that must be imported, and for the many hundred years required to bring the whole of Jamaica into cultivation. Sir, that statement is fallacious. It is not true, that because it is 150 years since we possessed Jamaica, and because the negro population is at this day 250,000 out of 600,000 imported during that period, and because only one million of acres are yet cultivated, that therefore it will require 150 years more, and 600,000 more negroes, to settle another million of acres said to be patented. Four-fifths of its whole negro population have accrued within the last 75 years. The future importations requisite for settling the now patented but unsettled lands can bear no proportion to the past. Sir, the colonists cannot be averse to a termination of the Slave trade, whenever it may be effected by their own internal regulations, superseding the necessity of foreign importations. So long as that necessity continues, they claim, as against this country, the necessary supply—a supply which this country cannot deny them, consistently with the national honour and good faith, but upon terms of adequate compensation. I, however, disclaim all idea of compensation measured by the pitiful amount of office fees and charges paid upon the royal grants. If compensation means any thing, it means an indemnification to the colonists to the full extent of all their sufferings, and all their disappointments.

Mr. Secretary *Dundas* said, that it had been his misfortune since the first agitation of this question, never to be able to agree with any of those persons to the full extent of their opinions, who supported the most opposite extremes of argument on the subject. It had ever been his opinion, that our possessions in the West Indies would be held by a very imperfect tenure, if it was to depend entirely upon the supply of a factitious population. It was his fixed opinion that the abolition of the trade could not be effected without the consent and concurrence of the colonies themselves. The ground of this opinion he wished to state shortly. If great bodies of men, whether actuated by prejudice, by feeling, by resentment, by views of interest, were pertinacious in any sentiment, it was in vain to attempt to carry any measure in direct opposition to that sentiment. For instance, if, actuated by any, or all of these motives in a certain degree, the colonial inhabitants were decidedly against an immediate abolition, how was that object to be effected by the simple vote of that House? We did not possess the physical means of rendering the resolution effectual. We could not prevent the islands from receiving a supply of negroes. Of this fact, we had satisfactory experience. It had been found, that with all the vigilance of naval and military commanders, with the co-operation of the civil and military authorities, and the clear and active interest of the inhabitants, 28 ships of war had been insufficient to prevent any communication between the islands of St. Lucie and Guadaloupe, and our islands in their neighbourhood. How, then, could we expect that any vigilance would be sufficient to cut off that communication, when the interest and the dispositions of the inhabitants of the islands would lead them to favour such communication for the purpose of a supply of negroes? But it might be said, though the supply was obtained, did not we wipe away the stain which this traffic fixed on the national character? This might be true; but what was the argument for the abolition? Would the interest of humanity, would the advantage of the coast of Africa, be consulted by such a mode of proceeding? Certainly not. The trade would still be carried on; the supply would be obtained with this difference, that now the trade is conducted under the control and regulation of this House, whereas, then it would be carried on by other nations, free from all the salutary and humane regulations enforced by the parliament of this country. —In touching upon this point he was

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ready to admit that he was convinced by a perusal of the papers on the table, that the regulating act respecting the middle passage did not go far enough in its provisions. He did not think that sufficient tonnage was allowed for the number of men. A precipitate measure would take out of the hands of this House the means of alleviating, by proper regulation and control, the miseries with which the trade was attended. Disregarding any idea of popularity which he might forfeit by declaring his sentiments, he must disclaim any consideration of the profit of the African trade, or the loss which particular places might be supposed to incur by its abolition. He knew that such was the ingenuity and enterprise of the merchants of this country, that if capital was cut off from one mode of application, it would soon direct itself with advantage to some other channel. He then referred to the address adopted in April 1797, as the last positive interference of the House on this subject. The question now was, whether the House was to depart from the course it then resolved to pursue; or, whether there was any justification of such a departure in the present instance, because the colonial assemblies had shown themselves unworthy to be trusted with the execution of what was then the wish of the House? Had the colonial assemblies shown any reluctance to carry into effect the principle of that address? Those who, from repeated experience even on this very subject, know the difficulty of diverting men from any opinion to which by prejudice, by feeling, by views of interest, they may be attached, should not be surprised that their sentiments on any point are not all at once embraced. Might there not be some degree of irritation in the minds of the colonial legislatures, for which allowance should be made in the outset of the system recommended by the House? He doubted whether the hon. mover, with all his integrity of intention, possessed the same coolness on this subject which he had upon any other. It certainly ought not to be matter of wonder, that men labouring under so many motives to agitation or irritation of a different kind, should likewise be actuated by some feelings of warmth. To begin, then, with the proceedings of the assembly of Jamaica, he thought that more pains than was altogether necessary had been shown to justify the assembly of Jamaica. They appeared from their language to be irritated. It was natural, however, that they should think necessary to assert the right, which, by entering on the consideration of the subject, they wished it to be understood that they did not abandon; notwithstanding this, however, by the regulations they had adopted, they were taking the best mode of abolishing the trade. What were the objections to the Slave trade? Was it not that it created devastation in Africa, and that it introduced profligate and licentious persons into the islands? The assembly of Jamaica, however, had adopted a regulation, by which no slaves above the age of 25, were to be introduced, because they were desirous to have such as would secure the internal population, and prevent the necessity of constant supplies by importation. They had likewise adopted some humane and politic regulations respecting the education, the morals, and the religion of the negroes. Clergymen were employed for this purpose, and if they did their duty, the improvement of the negroes in religion and morality would, without any other regulations, tend to the final abolition of the traffic. Even whether the assembly mean it or not, the regulations they have introduced would effect that object. Formerly, when the regulation respecting age was passed by the colonial assembly, it was negatived here on a hearing in council, in which the regulation was opposed by the late Mr. Burke and sir W. Meredith, as contrary to the interests of Bristol and Liverpool, and defended by Mr. Fuller, and Mr. Brian Edwards. With respect to the Leeward Islands, their proceedings went most distinctly to accomplish the object of the address. The question was then, whether the islands were *bonâ fide* beginning the work? A question which their regulations actually adopted, answered in the affirmative. It was enacted, that the number of females brought in should exceed that of the males, which was evidently intended for internal population, and not for mere temporary use. He thought, then, that the regulations went great lengths. The principle of the address in 1797 was the only one by which an abolition could effectually be obtained; if any island appeared pertinacious in resisting that principle, it might then be considered how the power of this House should be exerted. Seeing, then, the progress already made, he thought it dangerous to push an immediate abolition.

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Colonel *Gascoyne* opposed the motion. He admitted the trade to be unjust and inhuman; but he asked whether the Slave trade was the only practice that was unjust and inhuman, that was not to be tolerated on the score of policy? The impressing of seamen was an unjust and inhuman practice, and yet policy required its continuance.

Mr. *Canning* began by observing, that the principal difficulties heretofore thrown in the way of those who addressed the House on that side of the present question, to which he professed himself to belong, had usually arisen from the triteness of the several topics of debate, and from the irksomeness of being constantly obliged to meet the same unchanging assertions, with the same invariable and unanswered arguments. The debate of to-night had afforded more novelty than he ever before remembered to have heard introduced upon this subject: and the novelty of the topics stated by the different opponents of the abolition, had been still farther diversified by the variety of lights in which even the same topics had been placed by the different gentlemen who made use of them. Not only had a totally new set of assertions, a new train of reasoning, been adopted by the advocates of the Slave trade in general; but still farther to perplex those who combated against them, to extend still more widely their line of defence, they had so contrived it, that no two gentlemen had handled the same arms in the same manner, no two speeches, no two arguments, which the House had that night heard on that side of the question, but what had been for the most part inconsistent with each other. Not that if this novelty and variety had been wanting to the debate he should have felt any shame in going over again the path which had been so often trodden, and meeting again the miserable pleas so often urged in favour of this abominable trade, and so often refuted, with the same weapons of refutation, which had already been employed against them. The shame was not in the advancement of old arguments, but in the maintenance of inveterate abuses. It was not the pride of victory that was to be sought, it was not the dexterity of contest that was to be applauded, on such a question. And whatever triumph might arise from seeing that the old arguments for the abolition continued unanswered, was in his mind effectually damped by the regret that a mischief so inveterate and detestable remained unabated.

The first variety introduced into the debate, which he should have occasion to notice was, the variety of construction applied by different gentlemen, particularly by his right hon. friend (Mr. Dundas), and by the hon. gentleman behind him (Mr. Sewell), to the very remarkable, and, as he thought, the very plain and intelligible address of the assembly of Jamaica. The House would recollect the situation in which the question of the abolition now stood, a situation in which it had been placed by the motion of an hon. friend of his (Mr. C. Ellis) two years ago, a motion which had proceeded from the purest benevolence and which had been brought forward in a manner which had done equal honour to the abilities and to the feelings of his hon. friend. The professed purpose of this motion was, to arrive gradually at the same end, which other gentlemen and he among the number, were desirous of reaching immediately—the final and entire termination of the trade in slaves. The mode proposed by his hon. friend's motion was, to address the king to recommend to the colonial assemblies to take such measures as besides meliorating the condition of the negroes upon the islands, securing to them the immediate and active protection of the law when aggrieved by their masters, and other objects equally desirable, should ultimately lead to the final termination of the trade. This motion was adopted by the House. It seemed, indeed, to the friends of the abolition to be a slow, and perhaps not very efficacious, mode of obtaining the object proposed. But there was no doubt of the sincerity with which it was intended to be followed up, by all the influence which those who supported it here could exert in the colonies: and as all the great West India proprietors, and all who had hitherto concurred in opposing the immediate abolition of the trade, concurred also in this address, praying for a recommendation from the throne to the assemblies, of such measures as should lead in the end to a termination (abolition it seems is a harsh word—but to a termination) of the trade: it appeared that the opposers of the Slave trade had gained at least thus much by the carrying of his hon. friend's motion—that there was no longer to be apprehended in that House any direct support of the trade, any assertion that it was a trade proper to be carried on lon-

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ger than was absolutely necessary, or that it could be necessary to carry it on for ever. The only point hereafter to be argued by those who doubted the propriety of instant abolition was, whether or not the colonial assemblies were, in fact, taking such steps as evinced a sincere desire to fulfil the expressed purpose of his hon. friend's motion, to take such measures as should lead, and to take them with the intent and view of their leading, to the final termination of the trade.

If it should appear that the assemblies were taking no such measures, or were taking no matter what measures with no such view, the question of immediate abolition of the trade by the legislature of this country, stood clearer and came forward with more irresistible force than ever. For, as it was no longer opposed by the argument, however false and detestable, that the trade was fit to be continued, as there were now not two opinions professed (whatever might be entertained) as to the propriety of its being ultimately terminated: as the only doubts professed to be entertained were with regard to the best mode of effecting this termination; as the modes could be but two, the first by an act of this country stopping the trade, the second by the acts of the colonial assemblies rendering its continuance unnecessary: it was naturally to be presumed, that if the latter of these modes should, upon trial, be found unlikely to produce the effect which we all alike have in view and at heart, there could be no longer any hesitation as to the propriety and necessity of recurring to the other. That the trade must be terminated, was agreed on all hands. If the colonial assemblies evinced both the power and the disposition to bring about its termination, well: those who argued against the abolition by this country, had then some ground to stand upon. But how if the colonial assemblies showed either that they could not, or that they would not do any such thing? Were not those who have agreed that the trade must be terminated in one way or other, bound by their own argument, bound by every principle of fair reasoning and fair dealing, by every principle of consistency with their own acts and words, with the acts and words which the British parliament adopted from them, to vote for the abolition by the British parliament?

This then was the state of the question now before the House. The point for their consideration was, whether the colonial assemblies appeared, by the papers on the table, to have entered heartily and *bonâ fide* into measures, such as were recommended to them by his majesty, in consequence of the address of the House of Commons in April 1797, and with the view and intent with which that address was framed, with a view to the termination of the trade. If they had done so—he did not say, God forbid that he should! that those gentlemen who had voted against that address, conceiving the mode pointed out in it to be inefficient, and who voted the same year for the direct abolition could be at all embarrassed, as to the vote which they ought to give in favour of the abolition this year; but he did admit that in that case those who had voted for that address, and who had relied upon the efficacy of the measures which it went to recommend, would be fairly entitled to argue that their experiment having succeeded thus far, should continue to be tried a little longer.

But what is the real state of this case? What was the conduct, what was the language of the assembly of Jamaica? And what were the interpretations to which the hon. gentleman (Mr. Sewell) and his right hon. friend, were obliged to have recourse to palliate, and excuse it? The assembly of Jamaica pass two acts—very good for aught he knew as matter of regulation—one for increasing the salaries of the clergy, the other for laying a duty amounting to a prohibition, on all negro slaves imported into the island above the age of twenty-five years. These two acts they transmit to the king, as what they have done to carry into effect his majesty's gracious recommendation. It was hardly necessary for them to add that they were not intended to terminate the Slave trade, because they might have defied the ingenuity of man to discover what there was in them that could, by any possibility, tend to its termination. But the assembly of Jamaica was too open and ingenuous to leave its meaning to be found out by implication or construction. They speak out manfully. They tell his majesty plainly, that in what they have done, "They have been actuated by views of humanity only, and not with any view to the termination of the Slave trade." Could any thing be more plain, simple, and intelligible? Was there a man in the House, was there a child that could just read, who, until his right hon.

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friend's ingenuity, and that of the hon. gentleman had been exercised upon this passage, could have for a moment mistaken its meaning? Here then the question, in all fairness and justice, ought to end. All parties were agreed that the Slave trade ought to be terminated. There are two ways of terminating it; by this House, or by the colonial legislatures. The colonial legislatures tell you plainly they will not terminate it. What remains, but for this House to exercise its own power—always, in his mind, the best, but now clearly proved to be the only medium through which the termination of the trade could be effected?

But "No," said his right hon. friend; "you mistake this matter: you misconstrue the words of the assembly of Jamaica. They are not to be taken in their direct and obvious sense. These colonists are never to be understood precisely as they speak. When they say *not* with a view to the termination of the trade, they mean, "*with* a view to the termination of the trade." Indeed! This did appear at first sight no small variation from the obvious meaning of the text. And it must be allowed that, if the assembly of Jamaica spoke out honestly, his right hon. friend interpreted freely. There was nothing in truth, which he more admired among the many great, and statesmanlike qualities of his right hon. friend's mind, than the boldness and decision with which he was in the habit of meeting every question. There was no quirk, no gloss, no subterfuge. He always spoke his meaning plainly, and openly, and undisguisedly. But, surely those qualities which his right hon. friend so eminently possessed himself, ought to have disinclined him to become the champion of an assembly, which had (if this interpretation was true), acted in a manner so directly the reverse of what he himself approved and practised—an assembly which (if his right hon. friend's interpretation was true), spoke one thing, and meant another; which misrepresented its own proceedings, and disavowed its own objects: which averred itself to be shaping its course towards one quarter, while it was steering directly to another.

This would surely be singular enough, if it were upon a matter of mere curiosity and speculation that his right hon. friend had thus indulged his ingenuity. But when he gravely recommended to the House of Commons to act upon such an interpretation—when he desired them to believe that the assembly of Jamaica—were sincerely pursuing an object, which they solemnly disavowed—when he insisted upon their forbearing to employ the means which they undoubtedly had in their power, and forbearing, in the confidence that the object would be better attained through those, who utterly disclaim any intention, who utterly deny the propriety of pursuing it; surely; when such a line of conduct was recommended to the House, even by such high authority as his right hon. friend, the House would pause awhile to question the reasonableness of a plan, so remote from all the common principles of human conduct and so contrary to all the ordinary practice of human life.

But, perhaps, it was not intended that they should believe the assembly of Jamaica to be sincere in their intention of terminating the Slave trade, at the moment when they professed their resolution to continue and maintain it;—perhaps it was only meant that, by taking such measures as they were now taking, that is, by raising the salaries of their clergy, and limiting the age of their new negroes, the assembly of Jamaica will, in spite of themselves, gradually bring to a termination the trade, which they declare themselves so bent upon maintaining: and the House was therefore called upon to give credit, not to the good intention of the assembly, but to the tendency of their actions to counterwork their ill intentions; not to the ardour with which they would labour for the extinction of the trade, and the judgment with which they would devise means for that end; but to their ill-contrivance and impolicy in selecting such measures for the continuance of the trade, as would in the result lead, not only without their concurrence, but against their wish to its abolition. Now, if this were what the House was to understand to be recommended by his right hon. friend, he could not forbear asking, whether this really was a line of policy which could be adopted with prudence, or with any hope. or expectation of success, by men looking steadily to an object, and anxious for the attainment of it? Would any one in private life, who had a favourite purpose to execute, which he had the choice of, either to execute himself, or through another person, prefer trusting the execution of it to that other person, after an avowal that he had no desire to execute it

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at all; trusting it to him, in the confidence that the agent would effect by mistake what he, the principal, might more easily effect by his own direct endeavours? But farther, was this a fair or flattering mode of treating between the legislatures of two countries? Would it please the assembly of Jamaica to be told, "we give no credit to your professions; but we have no apprehension of what you can do to thwart our purposes. Proceed in your own way—counteract us, if you will—but in the end you shall find, to your confusion, that you have only been counteracting yourselves; that you have done the very thing that we wished to be done, and which you determined not to do." If they were to be cautioned, as the House had been, to speak with respect of the assembly of Jamaica, is this the most respectful strain in which it is possible to address them? or would it not be more fair and manly, and had not the assembly of Jamaica deserved, by the fair and manly way in which they had declared their determination, that the House of Commons should say to them, "you have dealt honestly by us. We think the Slave trade ought not to subsist. If you had thought the same, we would willingly have left it to you to devise the means of putting an end to it. But you tell us plainly, that such is not your opinion. You tell us plainly that so far as depends upon you, the Slave trade shall be carried on to the end of time; that you see no prospect, that you see no reason, that you entertain no wish, that you will take no step for its termination. The avowal is frank, whatever we may think of the principle. There is no delusion, no hypocrisy in it. We thank you for your openness. It appears from what you say, that we must do our own work, if we would have it done at all—and, please God, we will set about doing it." Would not this be a more reasonable, and a more just mode of proceeding, than by construing, with his right hon. friend, the words of the assembly of Jamaica, in a way the very reverse of their obvious and evident meaning, to charge that assembly with falsehoods and inconsistency, in order to find an excuse to the House for its own supineness, and to reconcile it to the abandonment of its own object, and its own power?

His right hon. friend, however, could of course pretend to no higher authority than conjecture, for his interpretation. But the other hon. gentleman, as agent for the island of Jamaica, might be considered as a more skilful and accurate interpreter of the language of the assembly; and his interpretation was therefore to be listened to with the utmost deference and attention; and a very curious and ingenious interpretation it was. The hon. gentleman did not venture, like his right hon. friend, to represent the assembly as meaning the direct reverse of what they had stated. No; he knew too well the real bias and inclination of their minds, to take such a liberty with their words. But he contrived to gloss over the too sharp and prominent expression of their resolution to persevere in the Slave trade to all eternity, to cultivate, to improve, to increase, to cherish it—this he endeavoured to gloss over by an interpretation that should do neither good nor harm:—he could not hope to persuade us that the assembly meant well, as to the termination of the trade; it was a great point gained, if he could persuade the House that they meant nothing. According to that hon. gentleman's construction, the word "NOT with any view to the termination of the Slave trade," meant, "not influenced in what they are doing by any apprehension that the Slave trade will be terminated; not induced thereto by the threats of abolition." Upon this interpretation, he would only say, that if there was one unprejudiced man in the House who would get up, and laying his hand upon his heart would gravely aver, that he in his conscience believed this to be the true intent and meaning of the passage, he would give up the question. He paused to see if any man would venture to do so——

As no man ventured to make such an averment, he must conclude that the House felt, as he did, that the passage was to be taken in its plain, obvious, unmistakeable sense: that the assembly of Jamaica, while it was represented here as taking measures to carry into effect the recommendation of the king founded upon the address of the House of Commons for the termination of the Slave trade, had not any view to any such termination. Such was their plain language. But if there could be any additional light thrown upon the sense of a passage already as clear as noon day, what followed in the address was in itself the best commentary upon it. The two passages, indeed, mutually illustrated each

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other. "The right of obtaining labourers from Africa." The right! He had learnt, indeed, by painful experience of what had of late years passed in the world, to associate the word right, with ideas very different from those which, in old times, it was calculated to convey. He had learnt to regard the mention of rights as prefatory to bloody, destructive, and desolating doctrines, hostile to the happiness and to the freedom of mankind. Such had been the lesson which he had learnt from the rights of man. But never, even in the practical application of that detested and pernicious doctrine, never he believed, had the word right been so shamefully affixed to murder, to devastation, to the invasion of public independence, to the pollution and destruction of private happiness, to gross and unpalliated injustice, to the spreading of misery and mourning over the earth, to the massacre of innocent individuals, and to the extermination of unoffending nations; never before was the word right so prostituted and misapplied, as when the right to trade in man's blood was asserted by the enlightened government of a civilized country. It was not wonderful that the slavery of Africa should be described in a term consecrated to French freedom.

"But it was the right to *import labourers*"—gentle words! Not slaves, not for the world, not 'to trade in slaves,' but to 'import labourers;' "The right to import labourers from Africa is secured to your majesty's faithful subjects in this colony, by several British acts of parliament," &c. They then proceeded to state in the next paragraph, that they "have the utmost reliance on his majesty's paternal goodness, that this right should remain inviolate as long as they should remain faithful to his majesty, and true to the allegiance which they owe to the imperial crown of Great Britain." He quoted this passage particularly for the purpose of disclaiming any intention of countenancing the implication which the House had been so justly cautioned not to entertain, that the allegiance of the assembly was made dependent on the continuance of the Slave trade. He believed no such thing. He would have wished indeed, that the two subjects had not been coupled so closely in words; but he had no doubt of the loyalty of the colonial assemblies. They had given ample and honourable proofs of their affection for this country. He had no doubt that they would, under all circumstances, continue to do so. And he had as little doubt that it was not by obeying their local and transitory prejudices, nor by yielding to their temporary passions, but by consulting and securing their permanent interest, honour and happiness, that Great Britain would best deserve, and most effectually secure, their connexion and attachment.

But whatever might be the general credit which he was willing to give to the legislature of Jamaica for its readiness to acknowledge the paternal and superintending care of the British parliament; when he heard such acts of that legislature as were now on the table of the House, quoted as substantial proofs of their intention to carry into effect the declared opinion of the British parliament, that measures ought to be taken for the termination of the Slave trade (an intention which the legislature of Jamaica itself unequivocally disclaimed), he could not refrain from expressing a sentiment both of astonishment and indignation. "Never mind their declarations," said the hon. gentleman, the agent for Jamaica, "look to their acts." He looked to their acts; and what did he find? A better maintenance secured to their parochial clergy—good. What has this to do with the termination of the Slave trade? But what more? An act imposing a duty amounting to prohibition upon the importation of slaves above 25 years old. This too was good, and he thanked the hon. gentleman for calling upon him to examine it; but it was good, only as it proved the utter falsehood and futility of almost every argument upon which the propriety of the Slave trade had ever been attempted to be defended, and the impossibility of abolishing it attempted to be proved, from the first discussion of the subject up to the present hour.

First, then, here is a duty amounting to a prohibition. So it was possible to prohibit then? And all the arguments that the House had been in the habit of hearing, how vain and fruitless it would be to endeavour to establish Custom-house regulations, which should restrict the trade, or prevent contraband importation,—all these arguments were overthrown from their foundation by a single phrase of the legislative assembly of Jamaica. But would it be said, that though to prohibit importation altogether would be impossible, to limit it within certain bounds, taking the age of the negroes for your rule, would be very easy and prac-

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ticable? This might be so, but it certainly did not strike one at the first view, as creating an additional facility, but rather an additional difficulty, that the custom house officer was directed to prevent, not the importation of negroes, but the importation of negroes above twenty-five years old. For how, after all, was this to be known? Was it in Africa that the age was to be ascertained? By what species of parish register? By what testimony, verbal or written? Or was there some mark of mouth by which the age of those unfortunate beings was to be distinguished? Or rather, was not the whole regulation known and felt to be nugatory? And if such a regulation had been proposed by the friends of the abolition, would it not have been met with scorn and mockery, and answered merely by a sally against the ignorance and temerity of speculative reasoners upon practical subjects?

But, supposing this regulation could be made effectual, mark how it was contrived to run directly in the teeth of all that had ever been advanced, to give a colour of justice to the exportation of negroes from Africa. The House had often been told that the unhappy victims who were torn from their country by our slave traders, were, in fact, saved from a worse fate at home; for that they were convicts, or prisoners of war, who, if not sold for slaves, would be put to death: the slave traders would scorn to take any but such as were thus to be rescued from death by slavery—they, in fact, acted from motives of kindness to those whom they purchased; it would be barbarous to shut up the only issue which was left for those who were condemned to torture and destruction, to escape. All this had been gravely argued. But mark how the assembly of Jamaica has put it down. They will take nothing above 25 years old. How was this? Had they found some secret by which they could prevent any African from being guilty of a crime, any African from being made a prisoner of war, after he was five and twenty? Or did they mean to consign all those who were above that age, and were yet, in spite of this salutary regulation which precluded them from all escape from their country, so headstrong as to become convicts and captives, to consign them unpityingly to their fate? The women too—they were not to be more than twenty-five. Their crime the House had often been told (as they could not be prisoners of war), was witchcraft. What secret had the assembly of Jamaica found by which the practice of that dark art (which he was far from meaning to defend) could be confined within the limits of five and twenty? Or were they determined to rescue none but the young witches, and to leave the old ones to their fate? He was ashamed to appear to treat with levity a subject at which he could not look without horror and disgust. But when the most absurd and unreasonable pretences were set up in defence of the most abominable practices, it was impossible not to feel the attempt to impose on one's understanding, as an aggravation of the outrage to one's feelings. And when he recollected how often, and how boldly, these arguments of the justice of the trade had in former sessions been forced upon the House, he could not repress the triumph which he felt in seeing them thus laid prostrate and trampled under foot, by those very proceedings upon which the cause of the Slave trade was now exclusively rested.

Such, then, were the regulations which were to supersede the necessity of any interference on the part of the parliament of Great Britain, for an object which the parliament thinks indispensable, which the assembly by whom these regulations are made neither has nor pretends to have in view, and which these regulations are obviously not calculated in the smallest degree to promote. If, however, the interference of the British parliament were necessary, the House were told it must be ineffectual. The Slave trade would go on, do what they could to put a stop to it. What? Is a trade carried on by British subjects, with British capitals, in British bottoms, from British ports—not subject to British restrictions and regulations, not to be controlled, or abolished by British acts of parliament? But the trade, if not carried on by British traders, would fall into the hands of foreign nations. Foreign nations, it was well known, had almost entirely abandoned the trade; and that, in fact, Great Britain alone monopolized the gain and the guilt of the traffic in human creatures. Where is the law, or what is the power that can prevent her from washing out so foul a stain upon her commercial character? But the islands, if not supplied by Great Britain, would smuggle for themselves. Had they fleets then? Had they a commercial and a military navy? He would to God they had—for he was persuaded that never could

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any country attain to the degree of prosperity which such an establishment would argue, without having long, long before it reached that height, disused and abjured the practice of importing annual cargoes of misery and discontent, of outnumbering the civilized population of the country by crowds of savage and injured spirits, watching only the opportunity of rebellion and revenge. Away then with all apprehension of the incompetency of the British parliament to rescue the British name from the disgrace. Could the assembly of Jamaica prohibit the delivery of the cargo at the ports of Jamaica? And could not the parliament of Great Britain forbid its freight in the ships of Great Britain?

That in all the steps to be taken for the termination of the trade, the co-operation of the colonial assemblies was highly desirable, he frankly avowed: and he would even gladly purchase it at the price of some concession. He would state fairly what he should have considered as a serious manifestation on the part of the colonial assemblies of a desire to do something substantial towards bringing on the termination of the trade. If he had found in the papers upon the table, instead of a professed resolution to resist the termination of the trade; if he had found a law, prohibiting the cultivation of any new land in the island, beyond what was already cultivated, and another law, expressly limiting the amount of the annual importation of negroes to the amount of the annual decrease in their population—he should then have owned that he believed the colonial legislatures to be in earnest. And though he could not bring himself to say, that so often as the question was put to him, whether or no he would with his own good will allow another slave ship to sail to the coast of Africa; whether he would allow another cargo, another individual human being to be dragged from that country? though he could not say that, to that question so put to him, he could ever answer otherwise than by a flat negative; yet he would own, that had he seen the two regulations which he had mentioned solemnly enacted, and begun to be fairly acted upon by the colonial legislatures, he should very much have wished that question to be suspended, until the efficacy of those two measures towards rendering the continuance of the trade unnecessary had been allowed a trial.

He wished not to be misunderstood on these points. By allowing now new land to be brought into cultivation by slaves, he did not mean to tie down the planter to the actual spot which he was now working, or to prevent his removing from one estate, which might become effete and worn out, to another, with the same gang of negroes. What he meant to restrict was, the taking an additional quantity of land into cultivation, and thereby creating a new necessity for an increased importation of slaves. With regard to the annual decrease in the population, he had heard it said formerly that it was impossible to ascertain it. But the papers upon the table gave a direct contradiction to that, as they did to most of the other old arguments in favour of the Slave trade: for among other regulations he saw one for this specific purpose, of obtaining a correct account of the annual increase or decrease of slave population upon each estate. A tax was paid too for each slave. What could be ascertained for one purpose, was equally to be ascertained for another. Another point was, the compensation to the owners of uncultivated lands, for the advantage which they gave up in restricting themselves from additional cultivation. This compensation, he had no hesitation to say, ought to be liberally adjusted, and cheerfully given. By these two regulations, sincerely adopted, he had little doubt that more would be done than by any other mode that the colonial legislatures could adopt towards making the trade unnecessary: but till these were adopted, all pretence of putting an end to the trade, was an attempt to impose upon the understanding of the House. Every additional acre that was brought into cultivation was not the continuance of the existing Slave trade, but the opening of a new one. Every negro that was imported beyond the population necessary for keeping up the present rate of cultivation, was the victim of a trade begun now, under all the aggravation of a pretended conviction of its injustice, and a pretended desire to put an end to it. The discovery of a new island, and the ravage of a hitherto untouched coast, would not be more completely and substantially the beginning of a fresh trade in slaves, the source and fountain of new horrors, and outrages and calamities. Let no man who was not ready to subscribe heartily to these two regulations, expect to gain a moment's credit, by his profession, that he wished

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for the termination of the Slave trade, or by his assertion, that if it were now a question, whether the Slave trade should be, for the first time, established, he would be the man to oppose it.

He now came to the arguments of some gentlemen who had been chiefly instrumental in introducing into the debate that degree of novelty and variety, which had eminently distinguished this debate from any other that he remembered upon the same subject. Not contented with insisting, in the first place that the declaration of the assembly of Jamaica, that they had no view to the termination of the Slave trade, was to be accepted as a proof that they had the termination of the Slave trade constantly in their view and near their heart, not contented with contending, that in limiting the age of imported negroes, and adding to the salaries of the clergy of the island, the assembly of Jamaica had done all that human wit could devise, and all that human legislation could enact, towards the accomplishing the purposes of the friends of the abolition: the gentlemen who had contended against the motion, had added to these ingenious arguments another and a broader and still bolder one, which, if it be true, leaves very little room to question and very little reason to care, whether either of the other statements be true or false; namely, that for the sake of Africa the Slave trade ought to be continued. And to illustrate and adorn this topic, the hon. gentlemen had availed themselves of all those common places of humanity and philanthropy, all those appeals to the feelings of the House, which have been usually supposed to belong to those who contended on the other side of the question, and upon which they (the friends of the abolition) had, by these pathetic reasoners themselves, in this very debate, been accused of relying exclusively. He appealed to the House, whether he had not been right in ascribing the character of novelty to a debate, in which all the topics of fine feelings were found forcibly enlisted on the side of the Slave trade. One hon. gentleman (Mr. Petrie), had informed the House, that as a planter, he was most anxious for the abolition of the trade, but as a cosmopolite, as a friend of human nature and of the world at large, he must oppose it. "If you would confer a boon on the West Indies," said the hon. gentleman, "abolish the trade; but the West Indians are not so selfish as to desire even so beneficial a boon at the expense of their fellow creatures in Africa; and the heart shudders to conceive what must be the state of Africa without the Slave trade." Really, if any stranger had come into the House during that part of the debate, he must have conceived that the West Indians had been petitioning to be relieved from the burthen of importing annually vast numbers of dangerous, rebellious, unprincipled barbarians: and that the hon. gentleman, as agent for Africa, was stating to the House, in terms of the utmost pathos, the cruelty of depriving that country of so advantageous an export for its superfluous population. The British parliament must not be so hard-hearted. It must continue the traffic in human beings, the commerce of flesh and blood, out of mere humanity. It was not indeed the first time that the inhabitants of Africa had been the victims of humanity. The first importation of them into the West Indies was traced to a good Spanish bishop, who obtained the title of Friend of the Indians, by proposing to import negroes to relieve the native inhabitants of America from the toil with which their new inmates overwhelmed them. But the hon. gentleman went beyond the Spanish bishop in humanity; the bishop began the Slave trade for the advantage of the native inhabitants of the West Indies; the hon. gentleman would continue it, for the benefit of Africa, even though the present inhabitants of the West Indies were, as he said, averse to its continuance.

Next to the hon. gentleman, in kind consideration for the unhappy natives of Africa, came an hon. baronet (Sir W. Young), and an hon. gentleman (Mr. Dent), whom he classed together, because their two arguments, though in some degree contradictory to each other, made (when taken together) a complete defence of the Slave trade system in all its parts. The hon. baronet took upon himself the defence of the system of treatment in the islands: the hon. gentleman, as connected with a slave trading town, had to prove the propriety of the exportation from Africa. And this was the way in which they went about it. "Slavery, according to the hon. baronet, was taken in a vulgar sense by those who talked in so lamentable a strain upon the subject—the nature of slavery was not correctly understood—there was nothing

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in reality so afflicting or depressing in it. A state of slavery had produced great men among the ancients. If gentlemen would look into their Macrobius, they would find that half the ancient philosophers had been slaves." Such was the hon. baronet's statement. Mr. Canning professed he was not so much surprised at it, as some gentlemen appeared to be. When he had seen the word "right" applied in the manner in which it was applied in the Jamaica address in describing a system of oppression, cruelty, and rapine, he had guessed that its companion "philosophy" would not be far away. Right and Philosophy were the two surnames of tyranny and injustice in the vocabulary of French freedom: and the transition from that system of freedom to the system of absolute and abject slavery, was no violent or unnatural transition.

But while the hon. baronet was crying up the philosophy of slavery on the one hand; how did it happen that the hon. gentleman (Mr. Dent) could reconcile his feelings to such a mode of reasoning? The hon. gentleman had found great fault with his hon. friend (Mr. Wilberforce), for having mentioned in his opening speech that there were parts to be found in the interior of Africa where civilization had made such a progress, that books were not uncommon among the inhabitants. "Books!" exclaimed the hon. gentleman, "books! the blackamoors have books! and this the hon. mover gives as a reason for not exporting them as slaves! I think if the hon. gentleman had recollected all the mischief that books have done, especially of late years, in the world, he might have spared this argument at least. What produced the French revolution? Books! The House will not be induced to put a stop to the Slave trade, in order that the inhabitants of Africa might stay at home to be corrupted by reading books." Now, he must complain of a little unfairness in the arguments of the hon. baronet and the hon. gentleman, thus contrasted with each other. "Export the natives of Africa," said the hon. gentleman, "lest they become literati at home." "Bring them away," said the hon. baronet, "that they may become philosophers in the West Indies." He much doubted whether the remedy or the disease were the worst for the patient; but undoubtedly it did seem a little hard that no means could be found to prevent the dangers of African literature, except in the practical philosophy of the West Indies. The hon. baronet had taken fire at an expression in the speech of his hon. friend, who had averred that the regulations for the better treatment of slaves in the islands belonging to Great Britain did not, even in their present improved state, equal the *Code Noire* of the old French government. The hon. baronet felt the utmost indignation that the laws, by which the colonies of a free country were regulated, should be compared with any body of legislation emanating from an absolute monarchy. He might refer to the papers upon the table, to prove that be the *Code Noire* of France as bad as the hon. baronet was desirous it should be thought, the laws in the English West Indies had, at least, been found as susceptible of amendment: he might refer the hon. baronet to the maimings, and mutilations, the scourges, and spiked collars, the use of which was prohibited or regulated by the papers upon the table. But as he really wished to avoid any invidious or harsh topics, he would confine himself to more general observations upon the hon. baronet's way of treating this part of the subject and he would ask him, whether, in point of fact, he had never found, in the whole extent of his various reading in ancient and modern history, that the colonies of a free country were in general worse regulated and worse administered, than those of more absolute governments? That this might be an extraordinary truth, a painful truth, and one which well deserved the examination of the philosopher and the politician, to discover its causes, and remedy the effect, he was not disposed to deny. But that it was a truth, all history showed. If, therefore, his hon. friend had ventured this assertion, without such strong proof to support it, in the particular instances, as even the papers upon the table would afford, he would have asserted nothing that could call for the sort of indignant reprehension, which the hon. baronet had bestowed upon him; nothing that reflected personally on the gentlemen of the West Indies, nothing that reflected upon the character of this country; but a plain uncontradicted fact, true in general, true in the particular instance, and for which the proceedings now laid before the House furnished ample and indisputable vouchers.

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But the hon. baronet's argument proceeded on still broader grounds. "Tell not me," said he, "of the superiority of the French *Code Noire*, a code framed by a despotic government. It cannot be; it is not in the nature of things that it should be superior, or equal to the laws enacted by the government of a free country. However specious in appearance, there must be some radical defect in the laws enacted by despotism which prevents their beneficial influence." Was this so? Was the hon. baronet then prepared and contented to argue, that there was something in the nature of the relation between the despot and his slave, which must vitiate and render nugatory and null whatever laws the former might make for the benefit of the latter? which however speciously these laws might be framed, however well adapted they might appear to the evils which they were intended to alleviate, must infallibly be marred and defeated in the execution? Was this the hon. baronet's argument? He thanked him for it. He admitted the truth of it, up to any extent that the hon. baronet pleased. And let the House, let the hon. baronet himself, mark how it bore upon the question before them. The question is, whether in what is to be done towards alleviating and finally extinguishing the horrors of the Slave trade, the proper agent was the british House of Commons, or the colonial assemblies? The hon. baronet contended, that the colonial assemblies, and not the British House of Commons, were the agents most proper to be employed. But what was the hon. baronet's argument? "Trust not the masters of slaves in what concerns legislation for slavery! However specious their laws may appear, depend upon it, they must be ineffectual in their application. It is in the nature of things that they should be so." Granted. Let then the British House of Commons do their part themselves! Let them not delegate the trust of doing it to those who, according to the hon. baronet's testimony, cannot execute that trust fairly. Let the evils of the Slave trade be remedied by an assembly of Freemen, by the government of a free people, and not by those whom the hon. baronet represents as utterly unqualified for the undertaking, not by the masters of slaves! Their laws, the hon. baronet had avowed, could never reach, would never cure, the evil. So that, according to the hon. baronet's argument, if there had even been no doubt upon the face of the papers upon the table, of the sincere intention of the colonial assemblies to carry the wishes of this country into effect: if there had been no doubt that the termination of the trade was the object to which the regulations (such as they may be) were intended: if there had been no doubt that these regulations were in fact calculated for the purpose; if the assembly of Jamaica had professed as distinctly its anxiety to terminate the trade, as in point of fact it had expressed its resolution to continue it; still according to the hon. baronet's argument, no trust could be reposed in these appearances and professions. There was something in the nature of absolute authority, in the relation between master and slave, which made despotism, in all cases, and under all circumstances, an incompetent and unsure executor even of its own provisions in favour of the objects of its power.

But then came the general argument; that it is the interest of the proprietor that his slaves should be well treated, that they should not be overworked, that they should produce a natural population; and that any reasonable man would see a sufficient security in these circumstances against cruelty and oppression in the islands. In the first place, this argument proved too much. For as the interest of the planter in the preservation and propagation of his slaves had at all times been the same, it would go to establish that the slaves had at all times been treated as well as possible, with a view to their preservation, to the propagation of their race, and to the consequent discontinuance of importation: Suppositions which manifestly were not well founded; else where would have been the necessity, and what would be the benefit of the laws now upon the table of the House, upon the benevolent intention and efficacy of which so much stress was laid? But in the second place, the argument is perfectly fallacious. It was particularly unpleasant to go at large into this part of the subject, both because it was in its nature liable to be construed as invidious, and because it was not the part of the subject to which the motion of his hon. friend applied; but when points were stated so boldly, as containing incontrovertible truths, as setting all doubt at rest, and making all remedy useless and absurd, it was a little necessary to examine into them. He was not

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here contesting the fact, that slaves upon our islands were well treated. He was combating the assertion, that from the interest of the proprietors they must of necessity be so. First, then, that man's strongest permanent interests were liable to be overborne by his passions, need hardly be argued at length. Let gentlemen look at the laws upon the table, and see what sort of evils they are intended to remedy. Next, the interest of the proprietor, resident in the island unencumbered with debt, and looking to his estate as a permanent and improving provision for his family, is one thing: but that of the absentee proprietor who wishes to lay the foundation of a fortune elsewhere—that of the embarrassed proprietor, who wishes to discharge incumbrances—and lastly, that of the overseer, who is anxious to realize a sum of money as quickly as possible to purchase an estate for himself; all these might in the nature of things be interests of a very different kind indeed, from that steady and permanent interest, which contenting itself with moderate returns, would insure mild and considerate treatment to the labourers, whose work was to produce them. All these might require increased labour, and rapid produce; all these might, in the nature of things, be less solicitous about the eventual exhaustion of the soil, or of the workers of the soil, than about the extent of present profit. And when the proportion of these classes to that of the resident, and unembarrassed proprietors were considered, what became of the general statement that the interest of the owner must in all cases secure the good treatment of the slaves? That the slaves were in general well-treated he was far from being disposed to deny: he hoped, and believed they were so. But that they must be so, from any necessitating and unalterable cause, he could not agree. This, however, after all, was not the question before the House. However well slaves might be treated, he did not believe there were many persons who were disposed to contend that the importation from Africa was to be continued, merely to furnish objects for colonial benevolence. And he saw nothing therefore in the meliorated treatment of the slaves in the West Indies, that called for the continuance, though much that diminished the necessity of the Slave trade.

There remained only one argument, drawn from the circumstances of the awful times in which we live—an argument of great weight and wisdom in general, but not bearing very happily upon the question in debate. The House were gravely cautioned to beware how, in these times of turbulent innovation, when the old establishments of the world were shaken to their foundations, and many of them tumbling in hideous ruin about our ears; to beware how they laid their unhallowed hands on the ancient institution of the Slave trade! Seduced by plausible theories, and seeking after fancied perfection, would they rashly subvert a fabric reared by our ancestors, and consecrated by the lapse of ages? He had already had occasion to say something of the antiquity of the Slave trade, in apology for the want of novelty and of variety in the arguments which he might have to bring against it. Those arguments he had admitted could not choose but be old; he had admitted they must necessarily be always the same, because they were founded in what was eternal truth, because they were allied to what was immutable justice, and they partook of the immortality of the one and of the unchangeableness of the other. But little, indeed had he expected to hear the remote origin and long duration of the Slave trade brought forward with triumph; to hear the advocates of the Slave trade put in their claim for the venerableness of age, and the sacredness of prescription. What were the principles upon which we allowed a certain claim to our respect, to belong to any institution which had subsisted from remote time? What was the reason, why when any such institutions had, by the change of circumstances or of manners, become useless, we still tolerated them, nay cherished them with something of affectionate regard, and even when they became burthensome did not remove them without regret? of affectionate regard? What? but because in such institutions for the most part we saw the shadow of departed worth or usefulness, the monument and memorial of what had, in its origin, or during its vigour, been of service or of credit to mankind? Was this the case with the Slave trade? Was the Slave trade originally begun upon some principle of public justice, or national honour, which the lapse of time, which the mutations of the world have alone impaired and done away? Has it to plead former merits, services, and glories, in behalf of its present foulness and disgrace? Was its in-

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fancy lovely? or its manhood useful? though in its age it is become thus loathsome and perverse? No. Its infant lips were stained with blood. Its whole existence had been a series of rapacity, cruelty, and murder. It rested with the House to decide, whether it will allow to such a life the honours of old age, or endeavour to extend its duration. What were the grounds on which the plea of prescription usually rested? And in what cases was it where any existing order of things, though violent and unjust in its original institution, had by lapse of time been so meliorated and softened down, and reconciled to the feelings of mankind, had so accommodated itself to the manners and prejudices, and interwoven itself with the habits of a country, that the remembrance of its original usurpation was lost in the experience of present harmlessness or utility. Conquest was often of this nature: Violent and unjustifiable in its first introduction, it did often happen, that the conquerors, and the conquered, became blended into one people, and that a system of common interest arose out of the conciliated differences of parties originally hostile. But was this the case with the Slave trade? Was it in its outset only, that it had any thing of violence, of injustice, or of opposition? Were the wounds which Africa felt in the first conflict, healed and skinned over? Or were they fresh and green as at the moment when the first slave ship began its ravages upon the coast? Were the oppressors and oppressed so reconciled to each other, that no trace of enmity remained? Or was it in reason, or in common sense, to claim a prescriptive right, not to the fruits of an antient and forgotten crime, committed long ago, and traceable only in its consequences—but to a series of new violences, to a chain of fresh enormities, to cruelties not continued, but repeated, and of which every individual instance inflicted a fresh calamity, and constituted a fresh, a separate, and substantive, crime? He could not conceive, that in refusing to sanction the continuance of such a system, the House would feel itself, as in the smallest degree, impairing the respect due to the establishments of antiquity, or shaking the foundations of the British constitution. —Mr. Canning concluded, by reminding the House, that the question, however, immediately in dispute, was not, whether the Slave trade ought, at some time or other, to be terminated, (for upon that, it was professed loudly, that but one opinion could be entertained), but whether the papers upon the table contained such proofs of disposition on the part of the colonies, to bring about the termination of the Slave trade, that the House would, notwithstanding the distinct disclaimer of the assembly of Jamaica, of any such intention on their part, think itself justified in leaving the business wholly in the hands of that assembly, instead of themselves taking the necessary steps for securing the execution of their own purpose.

Mr. *Windham*, after complimenting Mr. Canning on the happy use he had made of his wit, called the attention of the House to what appeared to him to be a common sense view of the subject. He observed that there were two descriptions of sentiments entertained upon this question: one was that of a short and compendious mode, and was recommended by those who called for the immediate abolition of the trade: gentlemen of that side of the question contended that, as the trade was unjust and inhuman, that was enough to call for its immediate and unqualified abolition. This was deciding the matter upon the abstract right; and, as an abstract point, supposing that to be the only one, that determination was right: but he apprehended there was to be considered something beside the question of abstract right, and that was, the question of convenience and expedience; and in considering that point a great variety of objects made their appearance before the reflecting mind—and the real question at last, would be, by what possible mode was the least evil to be suffered? for a great evil must follow such a trade as that of the Slave trade, and the utmost effort of human wisdom could only choose the least. Those who were fond of abstract rights, were apt to make very considerable mistakes. They generally determined, when they found out an evil, to stop the cause of it immediately. They often recommended the immediate adoption of the reverse of that which was the cause of the evil. But such sudden and violent remedies often created a greater evil than that which they intended to remove. It was not difficult to show the absurdity of this system of reversing the cause of an evil by way of remedy to it: thus, for instance, if a man were thrown out of a high window, and had a fractured bone, or a dislocated joint, it would be but an indifferent mode of cure to

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throw him up again. Or if any one had a sore which had afflicted him long, it might be dangerous suddenly to stop its running. In this light did the immediate abolition of the Slave trade appear to him; or if not in this light, in another, which at best could possibly do no good; for he was persuaded, if we abolished it, the trade would be still carried on. Those of the other description to which he had alluded, defended the continuance of the trade as an advantage, but indeed it was now pretty generally admitted to be an evil. The real question appeared to him to be a question of political and moral prudence; that the evil of the trade could not fairly be stopped on a sudden; and that those who wished to do so, would find their means not adequate to the end. He therefore thought that the wiser course for the House to adopt was, to refer the amelioration of the condition of the unhappy slaves to the colonial assemblies. He concluded with giving his dissent to the motion.

Mr. *Pitt* said he was one of those who always had been, and until his mind should change its nature, always should be, a friend to the immediate and unqualified abolition of the Slave trade. He derived great satisfaction from what had been said by both his right hon. friends, (Mr Dundas and Mr. Windham). They had neither of them denied the injustice, nor the inhumanity of this trade, but had admitted it; but he thought he had heard some things that night which manifested a disposition to continue the trade for ever. He could not understand upon what ground the House was to dispute the propriety of discontinuing a trade which they themselves had declared to be against justice, humanity, morality, and religion, and for the abolition of which the honour of the British parliament stood pledged. The question now was, whether, as they felt what was said by the friends of the Slave trade, that they, the legislature, were the original authors of this iniquity, and of its continuance, and therefore answerable for all its horrors, they should not now become the authors of a remedy for these evils? This was a trade carried on under our law, by our subjects, from our ports, by our capital. If so, he thought it would not be very difficult for us to abolish it, and that effectually, even without the consent of the colonial assemblies. But this was said to be impossible, and that without the consent of the colonial assemblies we could do nothing; and yet the very same gentleman who told us this, told us also that the colonial assemblies were much alarmed, and trembled lest the proceedings of the British parliament should ruin the colonies by abolishing this trade. Both these points could not be solidly founded, for if we could not effectuate the abolition without the consent of the colonies, why should they tremble at our proceedings? According to that doctrine the vote of abolition could never be carried into effect without the assent of the colonies; then, why should they be alarmed at a measure, which can only have efficacy from their own consent? The truth was, that the parliament of this country had the means within itself of completely abolishing this trade, and it was their duty to do so. Some persons might think that however unjust or inhuman the trade might be, yet that it was a matter of great national concern, and not to be governed like a case between two individuals. But why should the conduct of a nation be guided in a manner that had no reference to the laws of nature, or the divine law, or the rules of reason any more than the affairs of an individual? The one required as much attention to these points as the other, and those who were the authors and continuers of this infamous traffic, ought now to put an end to the evil. He hoped he should not show himself so wedded to abstract theories, in opposition to practical experience, as to exclude things, because in theory they appeared defective, but which in practice had proved to be good. But here the end proposed was not a theory only, but a practical measure. It was two-fold. The one was to stop the mischief, the other to do away the guilt. At all events, the one was practicable—that was to do away the guilt; he believed the other was practicable also. But sure he was, they would never obtain any credit for intention to do away the mischief on the part of others, until they had done away the guilt on the part of themselves. His right hon. friend had said, that because a thing was wrong, we should not, on that account, adopt the contrary measure by way of remedy for the evil. Perfectly right: but that was not proposed to be done here: it was only proposed that we should discontinue an exposed, deprecated, convicted, recorded practice of injustice, rapine and murder; not whether that should not have ever

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been allowed, but whether it should now be deliberately repeated. If we were to ask the advice of the assemblies, we must continue that recorded practice of rapine and murder; we must continue to tear these helpless victims of misery from their native land, and from their families. But it was not intended to do that which his right hon. friend hinted at; for it was not intended to send the negroes back again to Africa. His right hon. friend had said, that if a man should happen to be thrown out of a window, by which he might have a bone fractured, or a joint dislocated, the remedy was not to throw him up again. It was not proposed to throw any of those wretches who had had their bones fractured and their joints dislocated, up again; it was only proposed that no more should be thrown out of the window. He wanted an end to be put to the practice, not to adopt the reverse of it; but his right hon. friend thought it would be dangerous to put an end to throwing men out of the window immediately; he wished to abolish the practice gradually; it must be done by throwing one hundred to-day, ninety to-morrow, and so on for that the custom had so long continued, that to abolish it immediately would be an unwise measure. So again was the case of his right hon. friend with regard to the running sore; that was not to be stopped at once—no, the blood of these poor negroes was to continue flowing; it was dangerous to stop it, because it had run so long; besides, we were under contract with certain surgeons to allow them a certain supply of human bodies every year for them to try experiments upon, and this we did out of pure love of science! Indeed, the act of the first importation, as well as the continuance of the trade, was a system of horror, to which this House had given birth, and which it was its duty to put an end to by an immediate abolition of this most murderous traffic; and he considered the abolition of the African traffic as the preliminary to, and indeed the *sine quâ non* of, the improvement of the condition of the negroes in the West Indies; and this led him to look at the abolition as a matter of prudence for the safety of our dominions, for without a plan for the improvement of the condition of the negroes in the plantations, there could be no security for the peace of those territories. A constant importation of the wretched victims from Africa was a constant importation of evils of the worst kind. It was against the horrors of this negro Jacobinism that he wished the parliament of this country to make provision; every hour in which this was possible was an hour of danger to the dearest interest of the colonies.—He contended that there was no necessity for fresh importations of negroes to cultivate the land originally laid out for the labour of these negroes. The great importation was, for the cultivation of fresh land in Jamaica, which, by the way was four fifths of the trade: this cultivation of fresh land would, according to a moderate calculation, take up above a century to continue importation according to the present rate—a thing insufferable in the bare idea, without talking of the dreadful reality. He then took notice of the language of the assembly of Jamaica, by which it was manifest, they claimed it as a right, that they should continue the Slave trade while they continued loyal to his majesty. He did not understand such conditions of allegiance. He hoped the House would agree to the abolition of this nefarious traffic at once, that being the only adequate remedy. Or, if they did not do so, that they would have it declared, expressly and specifically, for what purpose the trade was to be continued—that the boundary should be marked for the cultivation of the land—that new land should not be cultivated by negroes' labour: for if this was to be allowed, there was no knowing where it was to end. The notion thatthey had a right to cultivate all the lands they had in grants from the crown, was a great error. He would no more allow the cultivation of fresh lands by the labour of newly imported negroes, than he would assent to any new colony being established upon any newly-discovered territory. They were both equally repugnant to the spirit of the resolutions of the House, and repugnant to the terms on which even the planters could pretend that they had a right to the importation of negroes. He hoped if the House should negative this motion, which he trusted it would not, it would in the course of the present session come to a clear and distinct regulation upon the restraint of cultivation of fresh land in the plantations.

Colonel *Mark Wood* said, that if the question was merely one of humanity, and did not involve the first political as well as commercial considerations, there could not be the smallest difference in opinion

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upon the subject, as no man, however hardened, but must deprecate a traffic in our fellow creatures; but when we reflected that this trade had subsisted for upwards of a century; that through it our West-India colonies had in a manner been created, and risen to a degree of opulence unknown at any former period; and when we considered that it was by means of our great and extended commerce that Great Britain was enabled to hold her present high situation amongst nations, we surely must pause before we ever adopted a measure which might prove fatal to the interests of the country. It must be obvious to every person that unless with the concurrence and assistance of the colonial governments it would be impracticable to prevent the importation of slaves from Africa; and that if this was not done by British, it would be done by foreigners—to prevent which, half the navy of England would be inadequate. How far the cause of humanity would be forwarded by this change, he wished gentlemen to consider. At present, by means of wise and salutary regulations adopted by parliament, the situation of the Africans had been greatly improved: but over foreigners, parliament had no control; and former cruelties, with aggravated scenes of misery, would return, and the Africans have bitter cause to lament our humane, although mistaken, policy. The only rational way to put a stop to this trade would be to make it the interest of those who carried it on to abandon it. This was to be done by various modes; but the most obvious would be, to impose a pretty high duty on every negro imported into the West Indies; from which fund a premium to be paid on every male and female labourer born and bred upon the islands at a certain age. This would operate towards abolition in a double ratio. He begged leave, however, to deprecate every attempt to abolish the trade by compulsion.

The question being put, "That this House do now resolve itself into a committee of the whole House to consider of that motion;" the House divided:

Tellers.

Yeas	Mr. Canning Mr. Hobhouse	54
Noes	Mr. Sewell Sir William Young	84

So it passed in the negative.

Cold Bath Fields Prison.] March 6. Mr. *W. Dundas* moved, that a select committee be appointed to inquire into the state of his majesty's prison in Cold Bath fields, Clerkenwell, and to report the same as it shall appear to them, together with their opinion thereupon, to the House; and a committee was appointed accordingly. He also moved, that the report of the magistrates to the sessions, the affidavit of the governor of the prison, the letter of the duke of Portland, and the petition of colonel Despard be referred to the said committee.

Sir *F. Burdett* expressed his satisfaction that the matter was likely to become the subject of parliamentary investigation. It made the motion of which he had given notice unnecessary for the present.

East India Budget.] March 12. The House having resolved itself into a committee on the accounts of the East India Company,

Mr. Secretary *Dundas* rose and said:—As the nature of these accounts must have become familiar, it would be a waste of time to enter into a detailed description of them in this place, I shall therefore immediately request the attention of the committee to the several observations which have occurred during a close investigation of the many items of resource and expenditure, both actual and estimated, also of the debts and assets; and to the end that the most clear and distinct information may be afforded, I shall digest and arrange the subject in the same manner as on former occasions; and shall combine the whole, in order to give a general view of the resource and expenditure in India, both on actual account and on estimate. By this method will be ascertained the nett surplus of the Indian revenue, which, with the produce of the sales of imports, &c. forms the fund deemed applicable to the purchase of investments. The advances actually made for commercial purposes, and the amount of cargoes sent to Europe, will then be shown. In the next place, the debts and assets in India, compared with the preceding year. The home accounts will then be brought under remark; and the committee will, in like manner with the foreign, be furnished with explanations of the differences between the estimated and the actual, and of the variations in the debts and assets. And, lastly, I shall draw a general comparison of the debts

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and assets, both at home and abroad, in order to arrive at a conclusion, as accurate as possible, as to the state of affairs, contrasted with the last year. Having fulfilled these intentions, I shall only have occasion to trespass a little farther on the time of the committee, by requesting their attention to a few observations applying to the company's affairs generally, both with regard to the Indian possessions, and to the state of the commerce.—Mr. Dundas then went through the following statement:

BENGAL.

	£.
Revenues—Average 1794-5 to 1796-7	5,778,677
Less than last year	56,013
Estimated for 1796-7	5,710,511
Actual amount	5,703,906
Less than estimate	6,605
Charges—Estimated for 1796-7	3,733,860
Actual amount	3,362,942
More than estimate	129,082
Add excess of charge to deficiency of revenue, the nett revenue is less than estimated	135,687
And the nett revenue for this year is	1,840,964

Estimates, 1797-8.

Revenues	5,743,848
Charges	3,893,991
Nett revenue	1,849,857
Revenues estimated more than actual 1796-7	39,942
Charges ditto	31,049
Nett revenues, estimated for 1797-8, more than the preceding year	8,893

MADRAS.

Objection formerly stated to drawing an average does not exist in the same degree; the revenue of Ceylon in 1796-7 the only article to be deducted, the average of the revenues from 1794-5 to 1795-6, then is	1,846,074
Company's revenues, exclusive of subsidies in the respective years, and Ceylon in 1796-7, the average 1794-5 to 1796-7, more than average 1793-4 to 1795-6	61,468
Revenues—Estimated for 1796-7	2,159,402
Actual amount	1,996,328
Less than estimated	163,074
Charges—Estimated for 1796-7	2,005,225
Actual amount	2,408,492
More than estimate	403,267
Add excess of charge to deficiency of revenue, the actual account is worse than the estimate	566,341
And the nett charge of this year is	412,163

Estimates, 1797-8.

Revenues	2,334,676
Charges	2,482,838
Nett charge	148,162
Revenue estimated more than actual 1796-7	338,347
Charges ditto	74,347
Nett charge estimated for 1797-8, less than preceding year	2,640,000

BOMBAY.

Revenues—Average 1794-5 to 1796-7	302,004
More than average, stated last year	7,067
Revenues—Estimated for 1796-7	284,959
Actual amount	315,937
More than estimate	30,978
Charges—Estimated for 1796-7	777,973
Actual amount	841,825
More than the estimate	63,852
Deduct the excess of revenue from the excess of charge, the nett charge is more than estimated	32,874
And the nett charge of this year is	525,888

Estimate, 1797-8.

Revenues	319,101
Charges	844,050
Nett charge	525,949
Revenues estimated more than actual, 1796-7	3,163
Charges, ditto ditto	2,225
Nett charge estimated for 1797-8,	

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less than preceding year	938

BENCOOLEN AND OTHER SETTLEMENTS.

Revenues of Fort Marlboro', on average of three years, 1794-5 to 1796-7	4,932
Charges, ditto ditto	89,713
Net charge	84,781
Supplies from Bengal to Fort Marlborough, Pinang, &c. estimated for 1796-7	90,364
The actual amount was	101,190
Being more than estimated	10,826
Supplies estimated for 1797-8	85,840

GENERAL VIEW.

RESULT OF THE YEAR 1796-7, COLLECTIVELY.

REVENUES—Bengal	5,703,906	
Madras ..	1,996,328	
Bombay ..	315,937	
		8,016,171
CHARGES—Bengal	3,862,942	
Madras	2,408,492	
Bombay	841,825	
		7,113,259
Nett revenues of the three Presidencies ..		902,912
Deduct supplies of Bencoolen, &c.		101,190
Remainder		801,722
Deduct farther interest paid on debts,		
Bengal	352,325	
Madras	37,040	
Bombay	37,482	
		426,847
Nett surplus from the territorial revenues..		374,875
Add amount of sales of imports, certificates, &c.		381,938
Amount applicable to purchase of investments, payment of commercial charges, &c.		756,813
Amount actually advanced for purchase of investments, payment of commercial charges, and in aid of the China investment,		
At Bengal ..	1,202,394	
Madras ..	642,048	
Bombay ..	286,913	
Bencoolen	18,183	
		2,149,538
Exceeds amount applicable from revenues as before		1,392,725
Cargoes invoiced to Europe in 1796-7, with charges		1,877,432

GENERAL VIEW.

RESULT OF ESTIMATES 1797-8, COLLECTIVELY.

REVENUES—Bengal	5,743,848	
Madras ..	2,334,676	
Bombay ..	319,101	
		8,397,625
CHARGES—Bengal	3,893,991	
Madras	2,482,858	
Bombay	844,050	
		7,220,879
Nett estimated revenue of the three Presidencies		1,176,746
Deduct, Supplies of Bencoolen, &c.		85,840
Remainder		1,090,906
Deduct farther, Interest on the debts		576,775
Add		514,131
Estimated amount, sales of imports, and certificates, &c.		500,336
Amount estimated to be applicable in 1797-8, to the purchase of investments, payment of commercial charges, &c.		1,014,467

DEBTS IN INDIA.

Amount stated last year	7,146,084
Amount this year	9,294,539
Increase	2,148,455
Debts transferred in the year	544,402

DEBTS BEARING INTEREST.

Amount last year	5,590,142
Amount this year	7,479,162
Interest of debt bearing interest ..	1,889,020
Amount of interest payable by accounts of last year	419,345
Amount of interest payable by accounts of this year	576,775
Increase of interest, payable annually	157,430

ASSETS IN INDIA.

Consisting of cash, goods, &c. last year	8,958,669
Ditto by the present statements ..	10,531,145
Increase of assets	1,572,476

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Deduct—Increase of assets from the above increase of debts—the state of the Company's affairs of India is worse by 575,979

HOME ACCOUNTS.

Aggregate amount of sales		6,053,401
Less than last year	2,108,908	
Difference in Company's goods alone	1,434,488	
Private trade more than last year	30,746	
Remaining difference in sale of Dutch goods.—Sales of Company's goods, estimated at		6,282,282
Actually amounted to		4,718,822
Less than estimated		1,556,060
Receipts on sale of Company's goods, estimated at		6,555,116
Actually amounted to		5,946,468
Receipt less than estimated		608,648
Charges and profit on private trade estimated at		196,000
Actually amounted to		115,808
Less than estimate		80,198

General Result.

Balance at close of year 1797-8, expected to be against the Company	1,836,320
Actual balance in consequence of issue of bonds, of aid by loans, and of smaller payments for freight, &c. than expected, was in favour	540,646
Making the balance of cash better than estimated	2,376,966

Estimates, 1798-9.

Receipt for sales of Company's goods	5,905,927

Result.

After calculating on a payment to the Bank, amounting to 800,000*l.* and a large sum for freight, without reckoning an increase of capital, issue of bonds or loans, the balance against the Company on 1st of March 1799, expected to be	1,318,937

DEBTS AT HOME.

In March 1797		7,918,559
In March 1798		7,288,692
Decrease		132,069
Assets at home and afloat on the 1st of March, 1797		12,476,719
Ditto on the 1st of March, 1798..		13,213,370
Increase		732,597
Adding increase of assets to the above decrease of debt, the state of affairs at home appears better		1,366,322

CHINA AND ST. HELENA.

Balance in China last year in favour	279,250	
Ditto this year against	718,945	
Difference at China against ——		998,195
Balance at St. Helena last year	58,463	
Ditto this year.....	54,248	
Decrease at St. Helena.... ——		4,215
Less at China and St. Helena		1,002,410

GENERAL COMPARISON OF DEBTS AND ASSETS.

Increase of debt in India		2,148,455
Decrease of debts at home		631,765
Increase of debts		1,516,690
Increase of assets in India	1,572,476	
Increase of assets at home	734,557	
Deduct	2,307,033	
Balance at China and St. Helena, less	1,002,410	
Nett increase of assets		1,304,623
The increase of debt, or the general state of the Company's concerns, is, in this view, more than at the close of the last year.....		212,067
Add charges of four ships from Bombay, arrived in time for insertion in the home accounts ..		201,153
The total then is		413,220

I shall now request the attention of the committee to a few short observations, relating to the general situation of the affairs of the company. It has always been my endeavour, that the subject of Indian finance should be rendered as clear and intelligible as possible. By the mode now in practice, a comparison of different periods can easily be effected; and whether changes occur for the better, or otherwise, the causes may be traced with great facility. It afforded me real satisfaction, when I last addressed the committee, to be thereby enabled to state, upon authentic documents, the improvement of this valuable concern, on a comparison be-

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tween the year 1786 and the period then under examination. By the present statements it has appeared, that an alteration has taken place on the unfavourable side. The balance of property, contrasted with the last year, has, from a variety of circumstances, turned out to be less in favour of the company; but as the causes have been clearly discovered and pointed out, and as they appear to have been effected, in the most part, by means of a temporary nature, some of them arising from the pressure of contingencies unavoidably produced by a protracted war, I trust it will become a matter of surprise, that under such events, the general state of the affairs has not suffered a more considerable reverse. It is, however, still satisfactory to reflect, that in India, the only inconvenience produced by the war has been upon the treasuries, in a certain degree; but this effect, it may be presumed, will not be permanent. The successful termination of the several important expeditions, by which the enemies of this country have been deprived of their settlements in the East, has afforded additional security to the possessions of the company, and has likewise opened new sources of wealth, from which there is every reason to hope a full compensation will eventually be derived, for the pecuniary sacrifices that have been made.

The immediate effect of these measures has been, to absorb the major part of the funds, which would have been derived from the Indian revenue towards the provision of the investment. The immensely increased demand, on this account, has enhanced the value of money, so as to occasion the necessity of having recourse to loans, at higher interests than formerly in practice: the rate of exchange has also increased in proportion. The additional call upon the treasuries for interest will, for a time, operate unfavourably, and the prime cost of goods must incur some increase. The result of all these events, however temporarily distressing, is not to be mentioned, in a comparison with the more substantial and permanent benefits which may ultimately be expected, both abroad and at home. At home an increase of assets, and a decrease of debts, has clearly been demonstrated, and the nett improvement ascertained to be 1,366,322*l.* Although the Indian concern has been so considerably affected by the circumstances above pointed out, and although the balance of stock at China is more unfavourable, by near a million; the general balance, on the comparison with last year, is only 413,000*l.* worse. Against this statement it may be objected, that credit is taken, in the calculations, for articles in India, which cannot justly be reckoned upon as an improvement of property; but, on the other hand, it is fair to state, when making a comparison, that the debts have increased more than a million, from a circumstance which by no means applies to the concerns of the year, viz. the issue of bonds for payment of arrears to the private creditors of the nabob of Arcot.

The improvement at home would have still been more considerable, if disappointment had not occurred as to the arrival of the goods: the property in India, it is true, would have been lessened, but not in proportion. The short amount of the sales has been stated to arise from this circumstance alone; and it is satisfactory to find, that so far as the commerce is concerned, there is every appearance of prosperity. The immense sale of private trade goods, affords a display of the rising commercial prosperity and increasing wealth of the settlements abroad, and proves the advantage derived, and to be derived, from the extension of privilege to private traders, by the act of 1793. The increasing demand for almost every species of Indian produce, whether raw or manufactured, strengthens the probability, that in this point of view, the prospects formerly held out will ultimately be completely realized. But as it may, with apparent truth, be asserted, that the improvement of the concern at home has been accomplished at the expense of that abroad, and in a manner which may bring in question the prudence or the propriety of extending the trade; because the purchase of investments has been made principally by money raised on loans, at a high rate of interest, from which the debts in India have increased beyond all reasonable bounds, and of course the demands for interest, so as to intrench, in an alarming degree, upon the resources which the revenues should supply towards the provision of investment, it is expedient to observe, that it was certainly the duty of the company to embrace the favourable opportunity of adding to their trade, which offered by the removal, for the most part, of foreign competition. My opinion, to that effect, was formerly given; and I have now to add, that if they had not done it, disastrous effects might have been

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produced: the industry of the natives would have been cramped, the cultivation of the raw material discouraged, and the manufactures deprived of support. The consequence in the company's provinces, in these cases, is so self-evident, as to require no explanation; and if it be asked, how the situation of the company has been, or will be affected, by the measure of extending the trade at this time, and by the means now adopted?—the reply is, an undue proportion of advantage will fall to the home concern; because a considerable part of the prime cost of the cargoes is paid for in India, by the addition to the debt there. The inconvenience produced thereby is great, but may not be looked upon as lasting, as measures may be adopted to supply from Europe the deficiency. The produce of the sales must furnish considerable means, and the court of directors are empowered, by act of parliament, to raise money, by an addition to the capital stock. The satisfactory accounts from India, of the increasing demand and profitable sale of the produce and manufactures of this country, encourage the prospect of great advantage by an enlarged export; so that, by a suitable application of the funds which must be forthcoming, essential relief may be afforded to the financial system in India, and the state of the concern, abroad and at home, restored to a proper level.

The internal situation of all the districts under the immediate government of the company, continues to exhibit the appearance of increasing prosperity. Having been protected by the successful operations of our fleets and armies, from becoming the theatre of war, no interruption has offered itself to the exertions of the industrious inhabitants. The encouragement afforded in all instances where a prospect of general advantage existed, has been productive of the happiest consequences. By accounts received from Bengal it is found, that articles, scarcely known a few years ago as an export, have been manufactured and shipped, to an immense amount; and that the export trade of those provinces by sea has been increased, in a quintuple degree, within the last twenty years, and has been doubled in the last ten: it must therefore appear, that the events of an unfavourable nature, which have been explained to the committee, are not of a description to affect the prosperity or the wealth of the subjects under the British dominion in India.

—The productiveness of the resources arising from the lands have continued, from year to year, at an amount which admits the hope of permanency. In Bengal, the present system is so well understood, and is so acceptable to the zemindars and renters, that no opposition is ever offered to the authority of government; neither does any other interruption occur to the collection of the public demands, than what must always be expected on a rental so extensive. Under the present regulations, provision is made for the realization of balances, and security is found in the improved value of the lands. The idea of the precarious tenure of the resource from salt has been done away for some years. Under the present system of management, which took place in 1793, the improvement has been substantial; because the objections which might, with a great degree of reason, be raised to the principles on which the monopoly was upheld, can no longer be said to exist. The labour of the Molungees, or salt-makers, is not now compulsory: distinctions in the several classes are abolished; and each receives a just and equal reward of industry. The laws against illicit trade having been effectually put in force, the purchaser at the sales reaps the expected profit from his dealing; and although the price has, within the two last years, suffered an augmentation, the consumer is not exposed to the inconvenience formerly known, because, from the increasing wealth of the provinces, more profitable means of employ are daily found. Every advice from India states the rising price of opium. The contract under which this article was furnished, expired in September 1797, and the system of agency has been substituted. No judgment can be formed, till the expiration of 1798-9, of the effect of the change; but as measures are taken to remove a very material cause of the first declension of the trade, the debased quality of the drug, and as the markets are again opening, it may be expected that the profit will soon equal its former amount.

I have had great pleasure in remarking the attention of the company's government to the happiness and comfort of the natives, and the endeavours always manifested to remove every species of oppression. They have appeared, in a particular degree, in the abolition of the police assessment. This was a tax levied on the houses of the inhabitants in the districts, for the express

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purpose of maintaining an efficient police. The charges have, from the first institution, greatly exceeded the receipts; but notwithstanding the gradual increase of the latter, as the mode in which, of necessity, the collections were raised was represented to be oppressive, the tax has been altogether abolished, and a stamp duty substituted, for defraying the expense of this establishment.—In the districts under the presidencies of Madras and Bombay, although it has not yet been practicable to carry into full effect the beneficial regulations established in Bengal; resistance against the company's authority is less frequent, and the improvement of the land revenues becomes each year more apparent. The disturbance in a northern district of the Malabar province, noticed in my last address to the committee, has been quelled, and the refractory rajah reduced to terms of submission: measures have also been taken to prevent a similar occurrence in future. The changes at Oude will come more properly under remark, when the accounts of the next year shall be brought forward. The princes to whom I particularly allude at this time are, the nabob of Arcot and the rajah of Tanjore. Their territories are so contiguous to those of the company, and the terms on which the connexion with them exists are of such a nature, that although, under the treaties, the presidency of Madras have no authority to interfere in their governments while their engagements are discharged, yet they cannot but be essentially interested in the prosperity of their countries. For many reasons, a modification of those treaties was desirable, both as it concerned the company, and the interests of the princes themselves. Representations and remonstrances to that effect have been made to the nabob of Arcot. As to the rajah of Tanjore, the committee are already apprized of the summary measures resorted to with him. In 1796, he was prevailed upon to agree to terms of an arrangement, from which there was every reason to expect the most beneficial consequences, both to his country and to the company; but from some particular circumstances, this arrangement was set aside. The long train of evils arising from the grossest extravagance and mismanagement, which had occasioned the necessity of this interference, soon produced the effect naturally to be expected; the stipulated engagements were not discharged; and in 1797 it was found requisite to enforce the treaty of 1792, and to take possession of the three districts assigned as security for the company's demand.

I have only to add, that the expenses in India have been, and for a time must continue to be, very burthensome; but with the exception of the new military arrangements, and some others of a judicial nature, a large amount may be considered temporary. Economy is enjoined in every department; but in the present situation of affairs, it would be completely unwise to relax in attention to every measure, requisite to a state of readiness to meet the attempts of the enemy on any part of the dominions. From what has been stated, the inference is perfectly just, that the wealth of the Indian provinces has been progressively improving, and that the affairs of the East India company have derived every advantage that could be expected from this improvement, on contrasting the amount of the balance of property at this time with what it was ten years back.—There can be no difference of opinion, as to the propriety of the company's availing themselves, to the utmost extent of their means, of the commerce, the monopoly of which they hold by their exclusive privilege; but it is to be recollected, that the imperial interests of the country must likewise come under the consideration of those, to whom the control over this great concern is committed: for if a statement, which has been made to me, be correct, that the export of the wealth of India to Europe amounts to no less a sum than five millions sterling annually, of which it appears that the company are not able to bring to this country much more than two millions, while the rest finds its way to the several ports of Europe in other vessels than those which should form a part of the strength of the empire; there is nothing deserves more the attention and ardent exertions of his majesty's ministers, than to devise some mode to remedy an evil of so great magnitude. The interests of our commerce, our navigation, and our power call for it; and if the plan at present in contemplation, with regard to the regulation of the duties, should not be sufficient, something farther must be brought forward, before the close of the present session.—The pre-eminence established by this country in India is truly gratifying; and it is the duty, both of the government and of the company, so to frame their regulations,

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that no part of the advantages to be derived from it be lost. The act of 1793 had this for its leading object, and it was hoped that the port of London would have become the grand receptacle of Indian produce. Why this object has not been more fully obtained, must be made a subject of the most minute examination. The right of monopoly, vested in the East India company by their charter, should be supported to the fullest extent; and it is my wish that their means were equal to the bringing home the entire wealth of India: but if it shall appear, that all the funds they can command will not embrace more than the half of it, the necessity of an arrangement, by which the remainder shall be secured to the country, must be admitted, as of the first importance.—Mr. Dundas concluded with moving the first of a set of Resolutions founded upon the statement which he had submitted to the committee.

The said Resolutions were after a short conversation agreed to.

Report from the Committee of Secrecy of the House of Commons relative to the Proceedings of different Persons and Societies in Great Britain and Ireland engaged in a Treasonable Conspiracy.] March 15. Mr. Secretary Dundas made the following Report from the Committee of Secrecy.

REPORT.

The COMMITTEE of SECRECY, to whom the several Papers, which were presented (sealed up) to the House, by Mr. Secretary Dundas, upon the 23rd of January 1799, by his Majesty's command, were referred; and who were directed to examine the matters thereof, and report the same, as they shall appear to them, to the House;

Have proceeded, in obedience to the orders of the House, to the consideration of the matters referred to them. They have been prevented from sooner laying before the House the result of their examination, not only from the extent of the matters which came before them; but because some of the recent circumstances which they have to state, could not, with propriety, have been disclosed at an earlier period.

In the whole course of their inquiry, your Committee have found the clearest proofs of a systematic design, long since adopted and acted upon by France, in conjunction with domestic traitors, and pursued up to the present moment with unabated perseverance, to overturn the laws, constitution, and government, and every existing establishment, civil or ecclesiastical, both in Great Britain and Ireland; as well as to dissolve the connexion between the two kingdoms, so necessary to the security and prosperity of both.

The chief hope of accomplishing this design, has rested on the propagation of those destructive principles, which originally produced the French Revolution, with all the miseries and calamities since experienced in France, and now extended over a large part of Europe.

The most effectual engine employed for this purpose, has been the institution of political societies, of a nature and description before unknown in any country, and inconsistent with public tranquillity, and with the existence of regular government. The effects of this fatal cause, operating in its fullest extent, have been unhappily felt and exemplified in the distractions and calamities of Ireland. The same cause is known to have prepared the way for all the different revolutions by which France has succeeded in subverting so many of the governments of Europe, and reducing so many independent states to vassallage and subjection. In this country, similar measures have been attempted; and although they have been hitherto defeated, by the precautions of the legislature, by the vigilance of his majesty's government, and still more by the general good sense and loyalty of the nation, the object is not abandoned. The utmost diligence is still employed in endeavouring, not only to sustain and revive those societies whose seditious and treasonable purposes long since attracted the notice of parliament, but to extend their correspondence to every part of this kingdom, to Ireland, to France, and to those places on the continent, where French emissaries are established; and to institute new societies, formed precisely on the same plan, and directed by the same object, as those whose influence in Ireland has produced such pernicious and formidable effects; and of which, the consequences might have proved fatal to that kingdom, if they had not been averted, in a season of the greatest difficulty, by the wisdom, firmness, and exertion of his majesty's government, and the parliament of Ireland. The extent and uniformity of this systematic conspiracy, are equally striking. The formation and structure of all these societies, in this country, in Ireland, and on the continent, are similar; their views and principles are the same, as well as the means which they employ to extend their influence. A continued intercourse and concert has been maintained from their first origin to the present moment; sometimes between the societies themselves, sometimes between their leading members; and a frequent communication has been kept up with the government of France, to which they appear to look as their protector and ally, and which has repeatedly furnished an

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asylum to those, who, on account of their principal share in these criminal transactions, have become fugitives or outlaws from the British dominions.

In stating the grounds of this opinion, although your Committee will have much and important new matter to lay before the House; yet they will also be obliged to recall to the recollection of the House, many particulars which have already been brought under the consideration of parliament, but on which new lights have been thrown by the events which have since occurred, and by the subsequent intelligence which has been received. The information which has been produced to your Committee, on the whole of this subject, has been most ample and extensive. The indispensable necessity of secrecy, with respect to the sources of many parts of that intelligence, must be felt by the House, as resulting from considerations of good faith as well as public safety. They are convinced, that the early and uniform defeat of all attempts to disturb the public tranquillity of this kingdom, is, in a very great degree, to be ascribed to the meritorious and laudable diligence of the persons filling those departments of his majesty's government to which this duty has peculiarly belonged. They appear, during a long period of time, to have obtained early and accurate information of the chief designs and measures of the conspirators; and the striking manner in which the most important particulars of the secret intelligence thus procured, have, in a great variety of instances, been completely confirmed by events now notorious to the world, and by the confession of parties concerned, entitles, in the opinion of your Committee, the whole of the information derived from the same sources, to the fullest credit.

Sect. 1.—View of the Nature and System of the Society of United Irishmen, as fully established in Ireland.

Your Committee are induced, in the first instance, to state the nature, extent, and influence, of the Society of United Irishmen; because this society has proved the most powerful engine, in the hands of conspirators, against the government of their country, which has ever yet been devised; and because its proceedings place, in the clearest view, the real object of all societies of this description, either in Ireland or Great Britain; the peculiar means by which they act; and the extreme danger which such societies must produce, whenever they are fully established. It is this which has given exertion, consistency, solidity, and force, to the Irish rebellion; which has enabled the conspirators to form themselves, under the eye and in defiance of government, into one body, compacted by one bond of union, under an oath of fidelity and secrecy; engaging themselves, in the first instance, to misprision of treason, and, successively, to the perpetration of the most atrocious crimes. This society, thus united and combined, extended itself, by its subdivisions, through every part of the kingdom; and was enabled to involve, in one general confederacy, a very numerous description of individuals of almost every class, connected with each other by a pledge of secrecy, by consciousness of guilt, and by the sense of personal danger, either from the violated laws of their country, or from the resentment and power of their associates. These bonds of union were strengthened by the use of secret signs, frequently changed, and applied to different ranks in the conspiracy; for the purpose of preventing discovery.

The system thus established, gradually acquired the means of disturbing the tranquillity of the country in all its parts; of impeding the execution of justice, by forcible resistance to the authority of the laws; by the protection of accused persons; by the rescue of prisoners; the seizure of arms; and, at length, by the assassination of informers, of witnesses, of magistrates, and of jurymen; till, by the general terror which was diffused, the loyal inhabitants in different counties were successively driven into the towns, or compelled wholly to quit the kingdom. At the head of this extensive conspiracy was placed a committee, terming itself 'An Executive Directory,' extending its influence and power over the disaffected, through every part of the kingdom, by 'Provincial and Baronial committees;' through whom, and by the mission of itinerant delegates over the country, a universal correspondence was established, between this Executive Directory and all the subordinate powers and members of this system. An intercourse was maintained, in the name of the whole, with individuals and societies in this country, as well as with the governments of his majesty's enemies; and the conspirators were thus enabled to conceal, or display, their numbers at will; and, consequently, to magnify their power, or to hide their weakness; to circulate, with rapidity and effect, the most atrocious calumnies against his majesty's person and government, and against all descriptions and bodies of men, whom they thought it their interest to vilify; to raise contributions, extorted frequently even from those who had not become members of their union; to procure, disperse, and conceal arms, ammunition, and artillery; to collect military information; and, finally, to raise an army, formed of all those among them capable of bearing arms, and placed under the command of officers, in military divisions, corresponding with those established for the general purposes of the conspiracy.

It is material to state, in detail, the formation of the different branches of this system, in order to compare it with the institutions of a similar nature, which have been since formed in Great Britain, and which will be

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hereafter mentioned.* Each of the inferior societies consisted, according to their original institution, of thirty-six members; which number was afterwards reduced to twelve. These twelve chose a secretary and treasurer; and the secretaries of five of these societies formed what was called 'A Lower Baronial Committee;' which had the immediate direction and superintendance of those five societies. From each Lower Baronial Committee, thus constituted, one member was delegated to an 'Upper Baronial Committee;' which in like manner, assumed and exercised the superintendance and direction of the Lower Baronial Committees in the respective counties. The next superior committees were in populous towns, distinguished by the name of 'District Committees,' and in counties, by the name of 'County Committees;' and were composed of members delegated by the Upper Baronial Committees, each Upper Baronial Committee delegating one of its members to the District or County Committee; and the District or County Committees had the superintendance and direction of the Upper Baronial Committees. Having thus 'organized' (as it is termed) the several counties and populous towns, a committee, called 'A Subordinate Directory,' was erected in each of the four provinces of Ulster, Leinster, Munster, and Connaught, composed of two members or three, according to the extent and population of the districts which they represented; who were delegated to a Provincial Committee, which held the immediate direction and superintendance of the several County and District Committees in each of the four provinces; and a 'General Executive Directory,' composed of five persons, was elected by the Provincial Directories; but the election of this Directory was so managed, that none but the secretaries of the Provincial Directories knew on whom the election fell. It was made by ballot, but not reported to the electors; the appointment was notified only to those on whom the election devolved; and the Executive Directory, thus composed, assumed and exercised the supreme and uncontrolled command of the whole body of the union, which, by these secret modes of election, was kept utterly ignorant who were the persons to whom this implicit obedience was paid.

Sect. 2.—Institution of United Irishmen in 1791; and rise of different Societies in Great Britain.

For the purpose of obtaining a comprehensive view of the attempts which have been repeatedly made, in the course of the last eight years, for establishing a similar system in this country, and of the means by which they have been hitherto defeated, as well as in order to enable the House to judge fully of the perseverance with which the system is pursued, and of the nature and tendency of the measures which are carrying on at the present moment, your Committee deem it necessary before they advert to more recent transactions, to go back to that period, when societies of this tendency first appeared in both kingdoms, and to trace as shortly as they can, their progress and intercourse to the present time.

The society of United Irishmen, was established in the year 1791; and other societies in Great Britain, particularly the Constitutional society (which had long existed, but about this time assumed a new character) the Corresponding society (which was instituted in the spring of 1792) and the societies of persons in Scotland terming themselves 'The Friends of the People,' (which originated at nearly the same period) appear to have adopted, in their fullest extent, all the extravagant and violent principles of the French revolution. The events which followed, in the course of that year and the year 1792, encouraged among the leading members of these societies, and other persons of similar principles, a sanguine hope of introducing, into both countries (under pretence of the reform of abuses) what they termed, a 'new order of things,' founded on the principles of that revolution. The degree of bigotry and enthusiasm with which they attached themselves to these principles, was manifested, as well by the speeches and writings of the members of the societies, as by the zeal with which they laboured to propagate, among the lower classes of the community, a spirit of hatred and contempt for the existing laws and government of the country.

It can hardly be necessary to recall to the recollection of the House, the industry with which they endeavoured to disseminate these sentiments by the circulation of their own proceedings and resolutions; uniformly directed to vilify the forms and principles of the British constitution; to represent the people of this country as groaning under intolerable oppression; to eradicate all religious principle; and to recommend a recurrence to experiments of desperate innovation similar to those which were at that time adopted in France. For the same purpose, the works of Paine, and other seditious and impious publications, were distributed, throughout almost every part of the kingdom, with an activity and profusion beyond all former example.

So confident were the societies of the efficacy of these measures, that they appear almost universally to have looked forward from the beginning, to the entire overthrow of every existing establishment in these kingdoms, and to the creation of some democratical form of government; either by uniting the whole of the British empire into one republic, or by dividing it into two or more republics. The conspirators in Ireland, unquestionably, always meditated the complete separation of that country from Great Britain: all, however, considered themselves as en-

* Report of Secret Committee of House of Lords of Ireland, August 17, 1798.

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gaged in one common cause, as far as related to the destruction of the existing constitution; all looked to the success of the disaffected in each country as forwarding their common views; and each was ready to support the other in any resistance to the lawful government; a frequent intercourse among them was therefore considered as important to their ends; and they all invited, or expected, the countenance and aid of France.

The attempts made in the beginning of this conspiracy, to disguise the real objects under false pretences, which ought at no time to have imposed even on superficial observers, have long since been abandoned. Subsequent transactions have not merely shown the extremes to which the nature and principles of these societies naturally led, but have completely unveiled the original and settled designs of the persons chiefly concerned in them. Your Committee beg leave, in this place, to refer the House to *his Majesty's proclamation of the year 1792, and the several addresses of both Houses of Parliament thereupon; to the reports of the Committees of Parliament in this kingdom and in Ireland; and to the different trials for treason and sedition in both kingdoms. And they are confident, that an attentive examination of those documents can leave no doubt in the opinion of the House (even on the circumstances known at that early period) respecting the real nature and extent of the original conspiracy.

Sect. 3.—First open Attempt in Scotland.

The groundwork having been thus laid in each kingdom, the first public attempt, which was openly directed to the object of overthrowing the government, and effecting a revolution, was made in Scotland; under circumstances, which even then evidently marked the connexion between the disaffected throughout his Majesty's dominions An assembly, styling itself, "A General Convention of Delegates from the Societies of the Friends of the People throughout Scotland," met at Edinburgh on the 11th of December 1792. Thomas Muir, a leading member of this assembly, endeavoured to prevail upon its members, at one of their meetings, to receive, and answer, a paper, intituled, "An Address from the Society of United Irishmen in Dublin to the Delegates for promoting a Reform in Scotland;" dated the 23d of November 1792; and set forth in the Appendix (No. 1), in which the united Irish address the Scotch delegates, in what they term "the spirit of civic union, in the fellowship of a just and common cause;" and rejoiced, "that the Scotch did not consider themselves as merged and melted down into another country:" but that in the great national question to which the address alluded, "they were still Scotland." They added, "that the cause of the United Irish, was also the cause of the Scotch delegates;" that "universal emancipation, with representative legislature, was the polar principle which guided the society of United Irishmen;" that their end was "a national legislature, their means, a union of the whole people." And they recommended assembling the people in each country in, what they term, "peaceable and constitutional convention;" the object of which they attempted to disguise by the pretence of reform and petition to parliament. Several members of the Scotch Convention appear to have been alarmed at the language of this address, and notwithstanding the efforts of Muir, no answer was sent; and the meeting adjourned to April 1793. The conduct of Muir, in this assembly, formed part of the charge of sedition, upon which he was afterwards tried and found guilty. His zeal, however, recommended him to the conspirators in Ireland; and on the 11th of January 1793, he became a member of the Society of United Irishmen of Dublin. He was absent in France at the time of the second meeting of the Scotch Convention, which assembled in April 1793, and again adjourned itself to the 29th of October following; when it met a third time at Edinburgh, after the trial of Muir, who was convicted and sentenced for transportation in August 1793. It is well known, that he afterwards escaped from the place of his transportation, and has recently resided in France, pursuing a conduct marked by the most inveterate hostility to his country.

*This meeting of the Scotch Convention in October 1793, appears to have been held in concert with several societies in England, and particularly the Constitutional Society and the London Corresponding Society, already mentioned. These societies afterwards sent delegates to the Scotch Convention; the terms of whose instructions demonstrate the dangerous views of those who sent them.

Hamilton Rowan, a member of the Society of United Irishmen of Dublin (now a fugitive from Ireland, and attainted of high treason), and the hon. Simon Butler (likewise a member of the Society of United Irishmen) attended this meeting; and Hamilton Rowan had previously been solicited, by letter from Scotland, on the subject of sending delegates from Ireland to the Convention. It does not appear, however, that these persons bore the

* Proclamation and Addresses, 1792; Lords' Report, 1794; Commons' Report, May, 1794: ditto, ditto, June, 1794; Irish Lords Report, 1798; Commons ditto, 1798. Trial of Muir, Skirving, Margarot, Gerald, Palmer, and others, for sedition in Scotland in 1793 and 1794; of Watt and Downie for treason in Scotland in 1794; of Hardy and others for treason in 1794; of Redhead al. Yorke for sedition in 1795; of Stone for treason in 1796.

* Report of the Secret Committee of House of Commons, June 1794.

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distinct character of delegates, but they were received with marked attention; and the Convention resolved, on the 5th of November 1793, "that any of the members of the Society of United Irishmen of Dublin should be admitted to speak and vote in the Convention." On the 22d of November 1793, the Convention had changed its title to that of "The British Convention of Delegates of the People, associated to obtain Universal Suffrage and Annual Parliaments." They assumed, in almost every particular, the style and mode of proceeding adopted by the National Convention of France; they divided themselves into 'sections, committees of organization, instruction, finance, and secrecy;' granted 'honours of sitting;' made 'honourable mention' in their minutes of patriotic donations; entered their minutes "in the first year of the British Convention;" instituted "Primary societies, provisional assemblies and departments;" received from their sections a variety of motions and reports, some of which, in their studied affectation of French phrases, had the words, "*Vive la Convention*," prefixed to them, and ended with "*ça ira*;" and some were dated "First Year of the British Convention One and Indivisible."

The views of this dangerous assembly, appear from the minutes of their proceedings, and from the correspondence of Skirving their secretary, Margarot, and Gerald, the delegates of the London Corresponding Society, and Hardy, the secretary of that society; which are stated in the report of the Committee of this House in 1794, and in the Appendix to that Report, and were given in evidence on the trials above referred to.

It is observable, upon the face of these minutes, that the funds of this convention were extremely low; so low, that perhaps at first sight the assembly itself may appear to have been rather an object of contempt, from the apparent inadequacy of its pecuniary means, than an object of alarm from the dangerous extravagance of its revolutionary designs. It is happy for the peace of this country, that the means of these societies, in their different shapes and stages, have not been more equal to such designs. But the recent proceedings in Ireland too plainly show, that though the want of money may retard the progress and cripple the exertions of such conspiracies, yet numbers thus leagued together for the total subversion of the government and constitution of a country, possess means which (if not seasonably counteracted) may introduce scenes of the most horrid confusion, rebellion, and blood.

This Convention continued to hold its meetings in the city of Edinburgh, until the 4th of December 1793; when its objects evidently tending towards open rebellion, some of the leading members were arrested, together with Skirving their secretary; and Skirving, Margarot, and Gerald, were afterwards tried in Scotland for sedition, and sentenced to transportation. The members of this Convention, notwithstanding the arrest of some of their body, assembled again on the 5th of December, and refused to disperse till compelled by the magistrates; but they continued for some time to meet privately, in different societies, and to carry on a secret correspondence with various parts of England and Scotland.

The Society of United Irishmen of Dublin, who had already shown the interest they took in the meeting of this Convention, appear (as was to be expected) to have considered its dispersion as hostile to their views, and declared their sentiments, by a resolution of the 20th December, 1793; in which, after noticing what they called, "the oppressive attempt in Edinburgh, to stifle the voice of the people through the British Convention, and the truly patriotic resistance to that attempt," they resolved, "That all, or any, of the members of the British Convention, and the patriotic societies which delegated members to that convention, should be received as brothers and members of their society."

Sect. 4.—Attempts to assemble a Convention of the People in England.

The leading English societies, which have been already stated to have sent delegates to the Scotch Convention, and, during its sittings, and for a considerable time previous thereto, been actively employed in measures directed to similar objects. For the purpose of promoting their seditious projects, they had carried on a constant correspondence with all the numerous country societies, which had been formed in many populous towns in different parts of the kingdom. They had, as early as in May 1792, presented an address, sufficiently expressive of their principles, to those whom they styled, "The Friends of the Constitution at Paris, known by the name of Jacobins." In the end of the same year, after receiving a letter of approbation from persons calling themselves "Friends of Liberty and equality in France," they instituted a regular committee of foreign correspondence; and they had even proceeded to present addresses to the National Convention in France, which had then assumed the whole legislative and executive power, and was assembled for the purpose of framing a new constitution, and proceeding to the trial of the King. In one of these addresses, particularly noticed in the Report of 1794, but which your Committee think it material again to advert to, they styled the Convention, "Servants of a Sovereign People, and Benefactors of Mankind." They rejoice that the revolution had arrived at that point of perfection, which enabled them to address them by such a title. They extol the proceedings of the 10th of August as a glorious victory; and add, "The benefits will in part be ours, but the glory will be all your own; and it is the reward of your perseverance, the prize of

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virtue." In January following, at the eve of the murder of the French king, and of the commencement of hostilities against this country, Barrere, Roland, and St. André, active members of the French Convention, had been elected honorary members of the Constitutional Society: and two speeches made by Barrere and St. André, delivered for the express purpose of accelerating the condemnation and execution of the king, asserting the doctrines of the sovereignty of the people, and deducing, as its consequence, the unlimited rights of a National Convention, and the personal responsibility of the monarch, were entered on the books of the Constitutional Society; and the resolution for this purpose was published in the newspapers. Actuated by these principles, the English societies persevered in their design; and notwithstanding the dispersion of the meeting at Edinburgh, which had assumed the appellation of "The British Convention," proceeded on a plan, which they had long had in contemplation, for assembling, in England, a similar but more extensive meeting, under the appellation of "A Convention of the People."

At a general meeting of the Corresponding Society, held at the Globe tavern, on the 20th January 1794, a resolution and address to the people of England were agreed to, and ordered to be published; expressly directed to the object of assembling a general convention of the people. At another general meeting of the same society, held at Chalk Farm, on the 14th of April 1794, among a variety of inflammatory resolutions, they declared, that the whole proceedings of the late British convention at Edinburgh, claimed their approbation and applause. They, at the same time, returned thanks to Archibald Hamilton Rowan, prisoner in Newgate, in the city of Dublin (who had in March 1794, been chosen an honorary member of the Constitutional Society), as well as to the Society of United Irishmen in Dublin, whom they exhorted to persevere in their exertions to obtain justice for the people of Ireland. The language held on different occasions evidently showed their intention of endeavouring to establish, by force, the authority of such a convention. They exhorted each other "To prepare courageously for the struggle which they meditated;" and openly avowed that they meant to obtain the redress, which they professed to seek, not from parliament, not from the executive government, but from themselves, and from their own strength and valour; from their own laws, and not from the laws of those whom they termed their plunderers, enemies and oppressors." For the purpose of assembling such a convention, and of preparing the people at large to look to its proceedings with respect, and to adopt and countenance the doctrine and practices which it might recommend, itinerant members of the societies above-mentioned, dispersed themselves throughout different parts of the country, proceeding from town to town, and from village to village, endeavouring to inculcate into the minds of those with whom they conversed, the necessity of such a measure, as that which they had in contemplation, for the reform of the abuses of the government, and the redress of the grievances of the people; and describing, in language varied according to the passions or prejudices of different classes whom they addressed, the nature and extent of the different political purposes, which might be effected by a convention, once assembled. The dispersion of Paine's works, and other works of a similar tendency, was at the same time continued with increased industry; and the societies flattered themselves that they had, by these means, really made a progress towards preparing a large portion of the nation to favour their project.

The zeal, indeed, of many of the country societies appears to have outrun the instructions of the agents, and to have carried them into discussions, beyond those limits which the persons who planned and instigated the measure, thought it prudent in the first instance to prescribe. The agents were instructed to confine the views of the several societies to whom they were deputed, and to point the wishes of individuals purely to the attainment of universal suffrage, from which, once established, it was represented that all the reforms which could be desired would naturally flow; and it appears to have been the design of those who directed the business, to prevent the premature discussion of any of those points, which they represented as subordinate, until after the convention should have been assembled, and this primary object of universal suffrage obtained. No caution or prohibition, however, could prevent many of the country societies from showing how confidently they anticipated, as the result to which the deliberations of that convention must necessarily lead, the abolition of monarchy, of aristocracy, and of other establishments, which they deemed equally oppressive; and the substitution of a representative government, founded on the new doctrine of the rights of man; and uniting, in one body, all the legislative and executive powers of the state.

This intended convention was prevented from assembling by the arrest of the secretaries, and of several members of the two societies, called, 'The London Corresponding Society,' and 'The Constitutional Society.' The secretaries and leading members of the societies at Sheffield and Norwich (which, together with several other subordinate societies in different parts of the kingdom, were in constant correspondence with them) were also taken into custody. The attention of parliament was, at this period, directed to these proceedings; and in consequence of the evidence then laid before a secret committee of this House, the power of detaining suspected persons was intrusted to his majesty.

The subsequent proceedings are sufficiently

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known. Some of the persons so arrested were prosecuted for high treason. A grand jury for the county of Middlesex found a bill against Thomas Hardy, the secretary of the London Corresponding Society, and eleven others. Three of the persons so indicted, viz. Thomas Hardy, John Horne Tooke, and John Thelwall, were tried, and, on their trials, were acquitted of the charge in the indictment. But the evidence given on those trials established, in the clearest manner, the grounds on which the committees of the two Houses of parliament had formed their reports in 1794; and showed, beyond a possibility of doubt, that the views of these persons and their confederates, were, in their nature, completely hostile to the existing government and constitution of this kingdom, and went directly to the subversion of every established and legitimate authority.

After these acquittals, Henry Redhead, alias Yorke, who had been committed at the same time on a charge of high treason, was brought to trial at York, in July 1795, upon an indictment for a seditious conspiracy; in which Joseph Gale, the printer of a news-paper at Sheffield, and Richard Davison, of Sheffield, both of whom had fled from justice, were included. Upon the trial of Yorke on this indictment, he was found guilty, and sentenced to two years imprisonment.

Sect. 5.—Farther proceedings subsequent to the Arrests in 1794.

The disclosures made upon these trials; the detentions already mentioned; and the powers vested in government by the "Act to empower His Majesty to secure and detain such Persons as His Majesty shall suspect are conspiring against His Person and Government," which received the royal assent on the 23rd of May 1794; broke, for a time, all the measures which had been concerted by the disaffected, and obliged them to proceed with more caution and reserve. But they never appear for a moment to have relinquished their original design; and the nature and constitution of the Corresponding Society, which still subsisted, peculiarly qualified it secretly to continue its machinations, and to extend and diffuse its pernicious principles among the lower orders of the people. The plan of this constitution, as originally proposed, not having been stated in the reports before referred to, is inserted in the Appendix (No. 2.). It is evident that the overthrow of every part of the government and constitution of this kingdom, was in the immediate contemplation of those by whom this plan was formed; and that it was contrived with the view of being applied to the most extensive purposes, if they had succeeded in that object, and of enabling the conspirators, after the overthrow of the existing government, to usurp and exercise an uncontrolled authority over the whole kingdom. It does not appear that this plan was ever formally adopted; but so much of it as led to the establishment of a secret system of direction, resembling that of the United Irishmen, was agreed to, and reduced to practice.

Not contented with employing these means gradually to extend their influence through different parts of the kingdom, the leading members of these societies, shortly before the opening of the session of parliament in October 1795, called together an unlawful meeting in a field near the metropolis, evidently with a view of trying the temper of the populace. Under the pretence of 'Debates,' language of the most seditious and inflammatory nature was held to a large multitude, whom curiosity, or other motives, had assembled there, and the most daring libels were uttered against every part of the constitution of these realms.

The public tranquillity appears to your committee to have been greatly endangered by this step; so exactly resembling that which fifteen years before had nearly led to the destruction of the metropolis: and your committee are decidedly of opinion, that the shameful and highly criminal outrages which soon after took place on the first day of the session, are, in a great degree, to be ascribed to the influence of these inflammatory proceedings, and of this public and open violation of the laws. It is not without regret, that your committee feel themselves obliged to recall to the recollection of the House, the horrid and sacrilegious attempt against His Majesty's person, with which those outrages were accompanied.

This alarming proof of the dreadful and desperate consequences which meetings and proceedings of such a description naturally tend to produce, made a deep impression on the minds of the public, and necessarily engaged the attention of parliament. On a full consideration of all the circumstances, the legislature, by salutary laws, strengthened the authority of the magistrate for the repression of sedition and tumult; provided fresh checks against meetings of a dangerous tendency, and of a description unknown in the history and constitution of this country; increased the penalties of obstinate and repeated guilt; and added a fresh safeguard to the sacred person of his majesty.

One of the immediate effects of these measures was, to put a stop to a practice, which had too long been suffered in the metropolis, to the disgrace of all order and government—the open and regular delivery of public lectures, inculcating the doctrines of sedition and treason; inciting the hearers to follow the example of France, and animating them to the commission of the most atrocious crimes. This practice has not since been revived in the same shape; but many of the debating societies, which subsist at the present time, appear, to your committee, to be, in a great measure, directed to the same pernicious objects, and to require farther animadversion and correction. Some check was also given

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to the licentiousness of the press, which had, till then, been in a great measure unrestrained. That licentiousness has furnished, in every part of Europe, one of the most dangerous instruments in the hands of conspirators. The industry with which every species of inflammatory and seditious libels had been disseminated, applying to the various passions and prejudices of every class of society, but particularly of that which is the least informed, and therefore the most open to seduction, is an unanswerable proof, both of the extent and of the zeal of the conspiracy in this country.

After the passing of these bills, the London Corresponding Societies sent their delegates into the country, to point out the method of evading them, and for the purpose of feeling the disposition of the people. Two persons, in this character, John Binns and John Gale Jones, were sent, by the London Corresponding Society to Birmingham, where they were arrested. They were found addressing a meeting of persons in that town Upon the person of Jones were found two papers; one a letter of credence from the Society, signed by John Ashley, their secretary, introducing Binns and Jones as their accredited delegates; and the other, the instruction of the society for the conduct of these delegates; both which papers your committee have inserted in the Appendix (Nos 3 and 4). They wish particularly to notice, that after directions given to the delegates, to persuade the people whom they were to address, that the sole object of the society was parliamentary reform, and that the bills last referred to, need not prevent their continuing to meet; the seventh article of the instructions, is in these words, "The design of the above articles is to remove misapprehensions relative to the safety of our association under the new laws. This part of your mission being effected, you are to strain every power of your mind to awaken the sleeping spirit of liberty; you are to call upon our fellow citizens to be ready with us to pursue our common object, if it must be, to the scaffold, or rather (if our enemies are desperate enough to bar up every avenue to enquiry and discussion) to the field, at the hazard of extermination; convinced that no temper less decided than this, will suffice to regain liberty from a bold usurping faction. But, to the end, that we may succeed by the irresistible voice of the people, you are to excite, in every society, the desire which animates our bosoms to embrace the nation as brethren, and the resolution to bear every repulse from passion and prejudice which fails to deprive us of the sure grounds of argument." And in the 13th article are the following expressions:—"In a word; you are always to reflect, that you are wrestling with the enemies of the human race, not for yourselves merely, for you may not see the full day of liberty, but for the child hanging at the breast; and that the question, whether the next generation shall be free, or not, may greatly depend on the wisdom and integrity of your conduct in the generous missions which you and your fellow deputies now take upon yourselves."

Notwithstanding this disposition to resist and evade the effect of these bills, yet the seasonable and effectual check thus, for a second time, given to the progress of sedition and treason, averted immediate danger; and if it did not extinguish the hopes of the conspirators, at least deterred them from the public avowal and pursuit of their projects. But the attempt to poison the minds of the lower orders of the people, and to prepare the means which might be resorted to on any favourable occasion, was pursued with unabating perseverance.

During the remainder of the year 1796, the system continued to operate silently and secretly; but, in the beginning of the following year, its contagious influence was found to have extended to a quarter, where it was the least to be suspected, and produced effects, which suddenly threatened the dearest interests and immediate safety of the country with the most imminent danger.

The mutiny which took place in the fleet, if considered in all its circumstances, will be traced to an intimate connexion with the principles and practices described by your committee, and furnishes the most alarming proof of the efficacy of those plans of secrecy and concert, so often referred to, and of the facility with which they are applied for inflaming and heightening discontent, from whatever cause it proceeds, and for converting what might otherwise produce only an hasty and inconsiderate breach of subordination and discipline, into the most settled and systematic treason and rebellion These principles and this concert could alone have produced the wide extent of the mutiny, and the uniformity of its operation, in so many and such distant quarters. The persons principally engaged in it, even in its early stages, were many of them United Irishmen. The mutineers were bound by secret oaths to the perpetration of the greatest crimes. An attempt was made to give to the ships in mutiny, the name of "The Floating Republic," and this attempt was countenanced both by papers published in France, and by a paper here, called "The Courier," which has, on many occasions, appeared almost equally devoted to the French cause. In some instances a disposition was manifested to direct the efforts of the mutineers to the object of compelling the government of this country to conclude a peace with the foreign enemy, and they at length even meditated betraying the ships of his majesty into the hands of that enemy. All these circumstances combine to impress your committee with a firm persuasion, that whatever were the pretences and misrepresentations employed to seduce from their duty a brave and loyal body of men; yet a spirit, in itself so repugnant to the habits and dispositions of British sailors, must have

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had its origin in those principles of foreign growth, which the societies of the conspirators have industriously introduced into this country, and which they have incessantly laboured to disseminate among all descriptions of men: but especially among those whose fidelity and steadiness is most important to the public safety.—A striking instance of the desperate extent to which these principles were carried, appears in the proceedings of a court martial, held in the month of June 1797; an abstract of which your Committee have thought it right to insert in the Appendix (No. 17). The opinion stated by your Committee, will be still more confirmed by the repeated and atrocious attempts (bearing still more evidently the character of those principles in which they originated) which have been made, in a great number of instances, since the general mutiny was suppressed; and of which it will be necessary for your committee hereafter to take notice. At the period now referred to, these systematic attempts made to seduce both the sailors and soldiers from their duty and allegiance, to incite them to mutiny, and to engage them in plans for the subversion of government, had become so apparent and frequent, as to attract the immediate notice of the legislature. Among these attempts, that made by a person of the name of Fellows, convicted at Maidstone, in July 1797, deserves particular attention. The seditious hand-bill, which he was proved to have distributed among the soldiers, is inserted in the Appendix (No. 5); and it appears from a letter (also there inserted) (No. 6), written by him to Evans and Bone, two of the most active members of the London Corresponding Society, and who have successively filled the office of secretary to that society, shortly before his arrest, that he had gone to Maidstone for the purpose of circulating seditious papers, as well as of making reports of the society at Maidstone.

In consequence of the prevalence of these dangerous practices, two acts of parliament were passed in the year 1797; one inflicting severe penalties on any person guilty of inciting any of his majesty's forces by sea or land to mutiny; the other for more effectually preventing the administering or taking of unlawful oaths. The propriety and necessity of both these acts, was farther evinced shortly after. A person of the name of Fuller, was detected two days after the passing the first act, in attempting to seduce a soldier belonging to the Coldstream regiment of guards, was found guilty at the following sessions of the Old Baily and sentenced to death; and one Charles Radcliffe, prosecuted under the second act, at the last court of session held for the county palatine of Chester, was found guilty of administering the oath or test of the society of United Englishmen. The paper found upon Fuller, and which formed the chief ground of his conviction, is inserted in the appendix (No. 7), and deserves particular attention.

Your Committee has thus traced the chief transactions which took place in this country, connected with the general design of the conspiracy nearly to the period when its effects were manifested in their most dreadful and formidable shape in Ireland, by the atrocious and unexampled rebellion which broke out in the beginning of the last summer. About this time, either with a view to that very rebellion, or in consequence of it, the societies in this country entered into still closer connexion with the society of United Irishmen, and assumed a shape, more similar than before to that extraordinary combination, the nature and effects of which have been already fully described. It will therefore be necessary for your Committee, in this place, shortly to review the progress of this society, and of the steps by which it gradually prepared the way for all the recent miseries and calamities which have been experienced in Ireland.

Sect. 6. Progress of the Society of United Irishmen in Ireland till the period of the Rebellion; its intercourse with France, and with leading Members of Societies in this country.

The transactions of the conspirators in that country are so fully detailed in the different reports of the two Houses of the Irish parliament, that your Committee do not think it necessary to state them at length; and will only call the attention of the House to such parts of them as prove, from the subsequent conduct of the conspirators, the falsehood of the early pretences by which they attempted to disguise their real views, as well as the intercourse kept up by them with the French Directory, chiefly through England, and the communication between leading members of the society of United Irishmen, and those of similar societies in Great Britain.

As early as in the year 1793, hopes and expectations were held out of French assistance; prayers were publicly offered up, at Belfast, from the pulpit, for the success of the French arms; military associations were entered into without any legal authority; and repeated attempts were made to seduce the soldiery from their duty.

In February 1794, Jackson, an Irish clergyman, passed from France, through England, into Ireland, for the purpose of carrying on a treasonable correspondence with a view to an invasion of both kingdoms. He was particularly recommended to some of the leading members of the English societies; and he transmitted to the French government, both from London and from Dublin, papers on the subject of his mission, which had been previously communicated to other persons in each kingdom *

In April 1794 he had many confidential

* Vide Jackson's and Stone's Trial, and Report of Commons in Ireland.

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conversations at Dublin, on this subject, with Hamilton Rowan, a leader of the United Irishmen, before mentioned; who was then in prison, and since his escape has been attainted for high treason; with Wolfe Tone, also a leading member of the same society, who was lately taken on board the French ship the Hoche, in the actual attempt to invade Ireland; and with Lewins, now the resident envoy from the United Irish at Paris.

Although the trials of Jackson and Stone, and the arrest and flight of Hamilton Rowan and Tone, checked these projects for a time, the Society of United Irishmen pursued their measures with unabating activity, the government of Ireland acquired information respecting the conduct of particular persons whom they had even at that time sufficient ground to consider as chiefly engaged in this treasonable conspiracy; particularly Lewins, above referred to; Henry and John Sheares, since convicted of high treason, and executed; Oliver Bond, and Wolfe Tone, convicted of the same crime, and both since dead, the latter by his own hands, to escape the punishment due to his crimes; lord Edward Fitzgerald, who died in prison in consequence of the wounds he received in resisting the officers of justice, and has been since attainted of high treason; and Arthur O'Connor, M'Nevin, and Emmett, whose individual guilt, as well as that of the whole conspiracy, is sufficiently proved by their own confessions.

It is stated, in the confessions of the three persons last named, that the first communication which came to their knowledge between the Irish and the French Directories, was an offer made by the latter, in the year 1796, to send a French army to Ireland to the assistance of the republicans; but the committee of the House of Lords in Ireland have stated it as their opinion, that Lewins had been dispatched to France, in the summer of 1795, to request this assistance; and your Committee are convinced, from secret intelligence which has been laid before them, that this opinion was well founded.

The invasion of Ireland, which was attempted in December 1796, was arranged at an interview which took place on the frontier of France between lord Edward Fitzgerald, Arthur O'Connor, and General Hoche, in the summer of that year. After the failure of this attempt, the solicitations of the Irish Directory, were renewed; a proposal, which arrived from France early in 1797 was accepted, and an answer transmitted, through England, by the means of Arthur O'Connor; Lewins was dispatched to Paris in April, and M'Nevin in June. Both were employed in urging the invasion of Ireland; and in counteracting the negociation for peace with the French republic; which his majesty's minister was then carrying on at Lisle. A conference was held in the same summer, in London, between lord Edward Fitzgerald and a French agent who came from Hamburgh, in which further arrangements were made for the intended invasion.

The arrest of several persons in Ireland, and the flight of others: and the memorable defeat, by lord Duncan, of the fleet intended to protect the expedition fitted out from Holland, again disconcerted the projects of the conspirators. After this event, the French government appears to have repeatedly urged the leaders of the Irish Union to immediate insurrection; but the more cautious amongst them were unwilling to act, until the French should actually have landed: and their opinion for a time prevailed.

The correspondence was in the mean time continued: the projects of rebellion and invasion were ripening; and at this period the hopes of the Irish conspirators derived fresh encouragement from reports of the progress of new societies in Great Britain, formed on the same plan with themselves. A regular communication was kept up between the Irish and English committees, through Arthur O'Connor, who had come from Ireland to England early in January 1798; and in the reports transmitted by the English societies to Ireland, the force of the United Englishmen (a society which had been recently formed on the model of the United Irish, and of which a more particular account will be given hereafter) was represented to be considerable, though your committee have reason to beleive that there was much exaggeration in these reports. Arthur O'Connor *, in a letter to his brother dated London, 13th February 1798, and seized in lord Edward Fitzgerald's apartments at Leinster House, states, "that Scotland is Irish all over; that the people here give no opinion, though it is easy to learn they look for a change."

At a provincial meeting in Ireland, held on the first of February 1798, it was stated to the meeting, by a person just arrived from Dublin, that, "the French were going on with the expedition, and that it was in a greater state of forwardness than was expected; but what was more flattering, three delegates had been sent from the United Britons to the Irish National Committee, and from that moment the Irish were to consider England, Scotland, and Ireland, all as one people, acting for one common cause." An address was at the same time produced, which it was stated the delegates of Britain had brought with them to the Irish National Committee. It was also stated, that the priest O'Coigly was one of the delegates mentioned to have been lately returned from France; and it was added that he, and another priest who had fled from Ireland, were the principal persons who had opened the communication with the United Britons.

At another provincial meeting, held on the 27th February 1798, it appears to have

* Vide Trial of O'Connor.

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been stated, "that a delegate had arrived from France; that the French were using every endeavour to have the expedition for Ireland completed: and that the Irish delegate came home to cause the United Irish to put themselves into a state of organization to join them, as the Directory positively assured the Irish delegates, that the expedition would set out for Ireland the end of April or the beginning of May." It was also stated, that there had been a meeting of all the delegates in England and Scotland held in London; but that their resolutions could not be obtained till the next provincial meeting, to be held on the 25th of March.

The address, which the delegates of United Britons were so stated, at the provincial meeting of the 1st of February 1798, to have brought with them to the Irish national committee, your committee have inserted in the Appendix (No. 8). About the same time a most seditious paper, sent from the London Corresponding Society to the Society of United Irishmen, signed J. T. Crossfield, president; Thomas Evans, secretary; dated 30th January 1798 (also inserted in the Appendix, No. 9). was published in Ireland, in a paper, called "The Press," and the original seized in March 1798, in consequence of the apprehension of Arthur O'Connor in England.

The priest O'Coigly, referred to in these transactions, and who has since been convicted and executed at Maidstone, was a native of Ireland, and went from that country to Cuxhaven in 1797 with another Irishman, who was obliged to fly from Ireland, and passed into Holland, at the time when the Dutch fleet, under admiral de Winter was about to sail, with a large body of troops, on an expedition destined against Ireland. When that fleet had sailed without the troops, O'Coigly and his companion went to Paris, where, finding themselves thwarted by the jealousy of the resident envoy from the Irish Union, O'Coigly returned to England about the middle of December 1797, and went to Ireland in January 1798. Whilst in Ireland, he appears to have had interviews and correspondence with lord Edward Fitzgerald, and others of the Irish conspirators; and he returned to England about the middle of February 1798.

Intelligence was conveyed to government of this man's designs, and particularly of his intention to pass into France, for the purposes, which afterwards appeared to be the object of his mission; he was therefore narrowly watched; and on the 28th of February 1798, he was, together with Arthur O'Connor, John Binns, Allen and Leary, taken into custody at Margate, in the attempt to obtain a passage to France. The particular circumstances attending these attempts, are detailed in the evidence on his trial. One of the papers, seized by the officers who apprehended him, was an address from "the Secret Committee of England to the Executive Directory of France," set forth in the Appendix (No. 10); clearly demonstrating the traitorous views of those who formed the address, and were instrumental in the attempt to transmit it to France.

It appears also to your committee, both from previous and subsequent information, that Arthur O'Connor, who had been, to the moment of leaving Ireland, one of the members of the Irish Directory, was not only going to France in the confidence that, when there, he should be considered and received as an accredited agent, but was confidentially employed by the remaining members of that Directory, who were at that time dissatisfied with the conduct of Lewins.

Sect. 7.—Further intercourse between the United Irishmen, the French Government, and the British Societies; formation of new Societies, and their Proceedings.

At the meetings of the London Corresponding Society, for above two years before this time, it had been avowed, that the object of the society was to form a republic, by the assistance of France. Reform in parliament, or even annual elections, or universal suffrage, were therefore no longer mentioned. Your committee have abundant reason to believe, from the information laid before them, that a person of the name of Ashley (one of the persons arrested in 1794) and who had, for a long time, been secretary to this society, was now acting as their agent at Paris, and had recently given them hopes of the succour of a French army. Meetings were held, to contrive the means of procuring arms, to enable them to co-operate with a French force, in case of an invasion. The leading members of the disaffected societies were also in the habit of frequenting an occasional meeting, which was held at a cellar in Furnival's Inn, and was first formed for the purpose of reading the libellous and treasonable publication, called "The Press." This place gradually became the resort of all those who were engaged the most deeply in the conspiracy. It was particularly attended by Arthur O'Connor and O'Coigly, previous to their attempt to go over to France; and by the persons chiefly instrumental in carrying on correspondence with the Irish conspirators; and secret consultations were repeatedly held there, with a view to projects, which were thought too dangerous and desperate to be brought forward in any of the larger societies. Among these plans, was that of effecting a general insurrection, at the same moment, in the metropolis and throughout the country, and of directing it to the object of seizing or assassinating the king, the royal family, and many of the members of both Houses of parliament. An officer, of some experience in his majesty's service, was selected as their military leader; and sanguine hopes were entertained, that they could command a sufficient force to effect their desperate purpose, in the first instance, by surprise. But although the apprehension

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that they could not as yet collect sufficient numbers to maintain and secure their advantage, appears, for the time, to have deterred them from the attempt; yet the general language held among these persons, at this period, proved, that they had brought themselves to the opinion that matters were nearly ripe for measures of open violence.

Attempts were at the same time made to form in London, upon the plan of the United Irishmen, the society of United Englishmen, or United Britons; before referred to: and O'Coigly and John Binns, appear to have been leading persons in that design. It was proposed to divide this society into four districts, including a large part of the coasts of this kingdom the most exposed to invasion: and it was also in contemplation to combine the operations of this society, with those of a society of United Irishmen; of which your committee will find it necessary separately to take notice.

Most of the societies through England which had used to correspond with the London Corresponding Society, had also about this time adopted the same plan of forming societies of United Englishmen; and finding their communications by writing to be hazardous they avoided, as far as possible, their keeping any papers; used cyphers, or mysterious words, in the few writings that passed between them, and principally carried on their intercourse by agents, who went from place to place, and were recognized by signs, which were frequently changed. Many ignorant or inconsiderate persons, throughout the country were gradually involved in these criminal transactions: and the influence of the destructive principles from which they proceeded, was still further extended by the establishment of clubs, among the lowest classes of the community, which were open to all persons paying one penny, and in which songs were sung, toasts given, and language held, of the most seditious nature.

Information having been received of a meeting of United Englishmen, to be held at a house in Clerkenwell, warrants of arrest were issued, and persons were apprehended on the 18th of April 1798. There was found upon the secretary of the London Corresponding Society (who appears to have officiated as president at that meeting) the oath proposed for the United Englishmen, set forth in the Appendix (No. 11); another oath, of the same nature, was found under the table; and also a printed constitution of the society of United Englishmen, set forth in the Appendix (Nos. 12 and 13).

Information having also been received of an extraordinary meeting of the delegates and secretary of the London Corresponding Society, intended to be assembled at a large room in Wych-street, on the 19th of April 1798, the persons there assembled were likewise arrested; and from the discoveries made in consequence of these arrests, the connexion between the London Corresponding Society and the London Society of United Englishmen was clearly established. It appeared, that about forty divisions of United Englishmen had been formed in London, about twenty of which had their regular places and days of meeting; and that many similar societies were forming in different parts of the country. With respect to these latter, it was intended that the different counties in Great Britain should, respectively, be divided into districts; in each of which a central society was to be established in the principal town, and was to carry on a constant correspondence, both with the smaller societies in that district and with the general society in London. And this system was so constructed, as to admit of still further subdivision, if the increase of numbers had been such as the leaders hoped.

It appears to your committee, that the chief progress made in the formation of societies of United Englishmen, was in London and the parts adjacent; and in Lancashire, and some parts of the west of England and of Wales, more immediately communicating with Ireland, and in which there was many United Irishmen, either as residents or as fugitives from their country.

At Manchester, and in the adjacent country in particular, the plan of these conspiracies was extending itself in the most alarming manner; and they were much promoted by the activity of the United Irishmen, of whom there are very large numbers resident in that neighbourhood. Great numbers of printed copies of the 'Constitution of United Englishmen,' have been discovered in Manchester and the neighbourhood; and it is evident that the society was making great progress, when it was checked by the arrest of several of its leaders in 1798.

A Society of United Englishmen had been established in and about Manchester before the year 1797. In the beginning of that year it consisted of about fifty divisions, and in the year 1798 had extended to about eighty. Each of these divisions consisted of not less than fifteen members, and was again subdivided when the number of its members exceeded thirty-six. This society has been particularly active in the most wicked attempts to seduce the soldiers in different regiments; for which purpose they adopted a system of more particular secrecy, and it has therefore been difficult to discover the extent of these crimes; but the general good conduct of his majesty's forces, of every description in this kingdom, affords the most satisfactory proof that these diabolical practices have not been successful in any considerable degree. The test used for the soldiers is set forth in the Appendix (No. 14). In other respects the society has followed the United Irish and the United English formed in London, in their constitution, their test, and their signs of secrecy; and its operations have been conducted with the same mystery, and under the same

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direction: the whole being governed by the persons who form the committee of United Englishmen, styled "The National Committee of England," who are, apparently, unknown to the rest of the members of the society, though their dictates are implicitly obeyed. They were the more induced to acquiesce in this system, and to obey implicitly the directions of their leaders, from the persuasion with which they appear to have been universally impressed, that persons of higher situations in life afforded them countenance and pecuniary aid; though, from circumstances of caution, those persons had not become actually members of the society; or if they were members, concealed the fact with considerable care, and did not attend the meetings. In some degree this persuasion may have been well founded; but your committee are induced to think, that some art was used to strengthen this impression, for the purpose of giving greater encouragement to the members in their hopes of final success.

The societies in the country connected with Manchester have been formed into twelve districts, each of which sent a delegate to the committee, called, the county committee; which appears to have corresponded, not only with the National Committee of England, but also with the National Committee of Ireland.

The intercourse between the United Englishmen in these parts and the United Irish, appears indeed to have been continual; many of the United Irish frequently passing and repassing between Cheshire or Lancashire, and Ireland, and frequently visiting the English societies. Among the persons who have been thus travelling from one country to the other, your committee have remarked O'Coigly, who repeatedly visited Manchester, Stockport, and other places in the neighbourhood; and particularly in the year 1797, when he was received with marked attention. He came there again in 1798, on his return from Ireland after his journey into France before mentioned. He then wore a military dress, and passed by the name of captain Jones, the same appellation by which he was introduced, by Arthur O'Connor, to Mr. H. Bell, of Charter House square, from whose house O'Connor took his departure, previous to his arrest at Deal. The accounts which have been obtained of his conversation and conduct at Manchester, leave no room to doubt the objects of his different journies between Great Britain, Ireland, and France, and particularly of his intended journey to France, which was prevented by his arrest, and there appears also little reason to doubt, that many, both of the United Englishmen and United Irish, at Manchester, and in its neighbourhood, were aware, of the general purport at least, of his mission, and anxiously expected that assistance from France, of which they received, from him, very strong assurances.

The society at Manchester seems to have been the central society of an extensive district; and to have been managed by a very zealous and active committee. It frequently sent delegates to places in the neighbourhood, and to various parts of Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and Cheshire. Their correspondence appears to have extended to the most distant parts of England, as well as to Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Liverpool also became the seat of another central society, presiding over a surrounding district, and corresponding with other parts of England, and with Scotland and Ireland; and different emissaries, some of whom were foreigners, about this time were sent through various parts of the kingdom, for the purpose of ascertaining the numbers and dispositions of the societies of United English and United Irish.

Whilst the societies in England were thus endeavouring to form a society of United Englishmen, or of United Britons, on the model of the Irish Society, attempts were made in Scotland to form a distinct society of 'United Scotsmen' on the same plan. And your committee cannot forbear to remark the industry with which it has been attempted in this instance, as well as in others, to separate Scotland as well as Ireland from England, and to found, on the ruins of the established government, three distinct republics of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

The attempts to form a society of United Scotsmen had made little progress till the Spring of 1797; but from the month of April 1797 until November following (when a discovery was made in the county of Fife, on which George Mealmaker was brought to trial, and convicted of sedition) these attempts appear to have been attended with more success, and particularly in the neighbourhood of Glasgow, and in the counties of Ayr, Renfrew, Lanerk, Dumbarton, Fife, and Perth. Glasgow, and the county of Ayr, were the places in which this spirit first manifested itself, and from which emissaries were sent into different parts of the country, for the purpose of increasing the numbers of the society, and disseminating what they termed, 'Political Knowledge.'

The societies thus formed in Scotland, appear to have been reduced to a system almost as regular and complete as that which was established in Ireland; the outlines of the plan were the same, and the studied secrecy of the proceedings, and the gradations of internal arrangement, formed its great characteristic. By a general rule of their association, no society was to consist of more than sixteen members, and when any society had obtained a number of members exceeding sixteen, it was to divide itself into two societies. In some small towns there were three or more such societies, all of which were sometimes assembled, by their individual members, or by a committee from each society; and such assemblies were termed

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'Parochial Meetings.' Each of these parochial meetings had a secretary, who was also treasurer; and one or two delegates were chosen to represent the parochial at the county meeting which was composed of delegates from all the parochial meetings within the county or district, and was held every six weeks. The delegates were elected by ballot, but the ballot was so conducted, that no person knew on whom the choice fell except the secretary and the person chosen. This election was sometimes made, by each member whispering in the ear of the secretary the name of the person for whom he gave his vote; and as there could be no material check on the declaration of the secretary, it is evident that the election of delegates might be managed in any manner most agreeable to the leaders of the society. The meetings called 'County Meetings' were not restricted to the known divisions of the counties, but were composed of delegates from parochial meetings, within either larger or smaller districts, according to the number of united Scotsmen in each neighbourhood. At the county meetings, delegates were elected, to represent the societies at a 'national meeting,' in the same secret manner as was used for the election of the delegates to the county meetings, and the place of that meeting was not generally disclosed. The secretary of the county meeting gave the delegate, when chosen, a small slip of paper, containing the name of a person to whom he was to apply, and who was to take him to the place of the national meeting. This person was called the 'intermediate.' The counties also were distinguished by numbers, and not by their names; and the delegate received, on another slip of paper, the number of his county, and the time appointed for the national meeting.

The meeting assuming this name was a committee formed of delegates from the county meetings, and assembled every seven weeks; and there the most important business of the society was transacted. This meeting received reports from a secret committee, and nominally directed its conduct, but the secret committee really had the chief management. This committee was elected, from amongst the delegates at the national meeting, in the same secret manner as those delegates had been chosen at the county meeting, the persons elected being only known to the secretary; and the committee, thus secretly formed, did not disclose itself in the transaction of business; all of which was conducted through the intervention of a person (already noticed) called the 'intermediate;' who delivered their orders, and who was the same person to whom the delegates had been directed to apply for information respecting the place of assembly of the national meeting. Except therefore to the intermediate, to the secretary, and to each other, the persons composing the secret committee remained wholly unknown.

Every proceeding was involved in the same mysterious secrecy; and though this system of blind obedience had the effect of disgusting and alarming some of the delegates, who perceived themselves to be instruments in the hands of an unknown authority for purposes, of which the extent was never fully disclosed to them; yet the committee, thus formed, continued to preserve its general influence; disbursing at its pleasure the money collected; giving all orders for the places of the national meetings; sending missionaries, disseminating papers, receiving information, and conducting every part of the business without control.

The national meeting was generally, if not always, held in or near Glasgow; and from reports of what passed at those meetings, it appears that they corresponded with the society of United Britons, and sent delegates to England, and received delegates from thence. When the meeting broke up, each delegate received a note of the time appointed for the next meeting; which he was to deliver to the secretary of his own county meeting, when the new delegate was elected.

Their communications with different parts, and particularly with England, were seldom carried on in writing: some papers, however, have been discovered, which clearly show that the society had the most dangerous objects in view; and that some of its members were sanguine enough to profess an opinion, "that if the flattering accounts which they received from London were real, the emancipation of the country was at no great distance, when they should rally round the standard of liberty."

This system of union as well as that of the United Englishmen, was evidently borrowed from Ireland; and there is reason to believe that it was introduced by delegates from that country. Signs were adopted for the purpose of distinguishing the members, as was practised in Ireland; but the knowledge of the signs seems to have been only imperfectly diffused; they never have been generally understood; or having been altered at different times, in different places, without concert, were never uniform in all parts of the country.

In their sanguine expectation of success, these conspirators formed wild and extravagant plans of seizing, in the same night, all the leading people over the whole island. If these persons should resist, they were to be put to death; if they submitted quietly, their lives and property were to be spared, but they were to be kept in custody till a new constitution should be formed; which was clearly meant to be conformable to French principles. An oath or test was formally administered, and printed papers were circulated under the title of "Resolutions and Constitution of the Society of United Scotsmen;" a copy of which is set forth in the Appendix (No. 15). The measures of this conspiracy were discon-

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certed by the arrest of Mealmaker, of Dyer, and of Archibald Gray, the latter of whom, after his indictment, escaped to the Continent, and has become a member of a society at Hamburgh, which will hereafter be noticed, by the name of 'the Philanthropic Society.'

In addition to this view of the proceedings of the societies both in England and Scotland, at this period, it is material to remark, that whilst the rebellion was at its height in Ireland, there were found individuals in this country, who so strongly manifested their desire to support the cause of the rebels, that they became the objects of criminal prosecution. Among these, a man, of the name of Martin Dunnovan, was indicted for distributing, at Gosport, the address stated in the appendix (No. 16) 'intituled, "An Irishman's Address to his Countrymen in England;" the contents of which perhaps might have warranted a prosecution for a higher crime, and are so striking a specimen of the intentions of the disaffected, that although the particular instance relates only to the conduct of one individual, your Committee have thought it highly deserving of notice. This man was convicted at the last Summer assizes at Winchester, and sentenced to two years imprisonment.

In pursuance of the same plan, the United Irishmen in this country have been incessantly labouring to disseminate their principles, both by means of secret combinations among such of them as have found their way into the naval service, and by extending their societies both in the metropolis, and in different parts of the kingdom. The extent to which these practices have prevailed, and (notwithstanding repeated instances of detection and punishment) are still carried on in the fleet has been too fully demonstrated by the evidence which has appeared in a variety of courts martial, the proceedings of which have been laid before your committee, and which contain matter so serious and important, that your committee have thought it right to insert an abstract of them in the Appendix (Nos. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22). It appears that oaths have been tendered by the mutineers to the crew, "to be United Irishmen, equal to their brethren in Ireland, and to have nothing to do with the king or his government." That they have acted in the professed expectation of assistance from France; with the express view of co-operating, for the expulsion of the Protestants from Ireland, and the erection of a Roman catholic government; and it has been part of their plan to murder their officers, to seize on the ship, and carry her to France or Ireland. On another occasion the oath has been as follows: "I swear to be true to the Free and United Irish, who are now fighting our cause against tyrants and oppressors, and to defend their rights to the last drop of my blood, and to keep all secret; and I do agree to carry the ship into Brest the next time the ship looks out a-head at sea, and to kill every officer and man that shall hinder us, except the master; and to hoist a green ensign with a harp in it, and afterwards to kill and destroy the Protestants."

The mutineers on board one of his majesty's ships appear to have been engaged in the plan of carrying the ship to France, in expectation that they would there be promoted in proportion to their crimes; that one of their ringleaders was to be appointed captain, and that they were then to proceed with the French against Ireland; and this deep laid villainy was disguised and aggravated by a degree of hypocrisy and imposture, scarcely to be paralleled; the particulars are stated in the Appendix (No. 20). The mutineers in another ship were proved to be connected with Corresponding Societies at Nottingham. The oath which they attempted to administer was, "to carry the ship into an enemy's port, either French, Dutch, or Irish; and they meant, in the event of being brought into action with an enemy's ship, to shoot their own officers on the quarter deck.

While these proceedings of the United Irishmen in the fleet exhibit so dreadful a picture of their sanguinary designs, and of the similarity of their views and principles to those which have produced so much calamity and bloodshed in Ireland, their conduct on shore has not been less deserving of the most serious attention. Your Committee have no hesitation in stating, on the clearest proof, strongly confirmed by recent circumstances, that among the various bodies enlisted, in any part of Great Britain for the purposes of sedition and treason, the societies which have been formed by the United Irishmen in this country, are in all respects the most formidable, particularly at the present moment; whether considered with a view to their combination, their actual numbers, or the atrocious nature of the designs of which they are preparing, in a very short time, to attempt the execution in direct co-operation with France.

The danger to be apprehended from these societies is much increased, from the constant communication which they maintain with the societies in Ireland; their mutual confidence in each other, and the alarming circumstance of their being, at this moment, subject to the same secret direction, and the same chiefs.

These societies have been instituted, not only in London, but in different parts of the country, and have formed themselves into subdivisions. In the Appendix (Nos. 23, and 24), are inserted printed forms of certificates of election to the society, which were seized among the papers of a person long engaged in this conspiracy. One of these forms has been framed for a 'London Society.' The other appears to relate to a society called an 'External Society.' The impression of the seal on the former of them, is the same with that of the seal found in the custody of lord

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Edward Fitzgerald, when he was apprehended. The reference in these certificates to the constitution, and the test, confirm the unquestionable information which your committee have received, that these societies form a part of the dreadful system which was unhappily established in Ireland. The constitution of the United Irishmen, such as it was acted upon in Ireland, appears to regulate their proceedings; and copies of this constitution have been found in the possession of persons principally concerned in promoting these meetings. The views which they entertain at this moment, and the sanguine hopes with which they look to their accomplishment, are apparent in an inflammatory and treasonable paper recently found at one of these meetings, of which government had received intelligence, and the persons present at which were consequently apprehended. This paper is inserted in the Appendix (No. 25). Other papers, seized at the same meeting, strongly confirm the account which your committee have received, that a mode has lately been adopted by these societies (similar to that practised both in Ireland and Scotland) of keeping the accounts of the society, by substituting different numbers for the names of the members. Your committee think it also not immaterial to insert in the Appendix (No. 26), copy of a printed card which has been found in the possession of different persons, and particularly among other seditious papers, in that of a person recently apprehended, who, there is reason to believe, has been very lately chosen to act as general secretary to the different societies of united Irishmen now in London. The person named in this card, and the transaction to which it relates, are such as to require no comment.

Your Committee have received different accounts of the numbers of this society; but though their force is probably exaggerated by themselves, for evident reasons, there is sufficient ground for believing that their numbers have been long considerable. Many Irish, ordinarily resident here, chiefly among the lowest classes of the community, have been gradually induced to become members of this society. But the most active part consists of those Irish rebels who have fled to this country: rendered desperate by their crimes, not daring to return to Ireland, and either unable to make their way to the countries subject to France, or not receiving sufficient encouragement to attempt it, they remain here, waiting for the opportunity of executing those violent and desperate projects, to which they have become familiar. And they appear to be under the direction of some persons of a higher class, who sometimes furnish pecuniary aid, and form the committee, by means of which, a constant correspondence is carried on, through Hamburgh, with France.

Among these plans, there is good reason to believe, that early in 1798, it was seriously in agitation among the conspirators in Ireland, to convey, in small vessels, from Ireland to England, a great number of United Irishmen; and to land them on different parts of the coast, with instructions to divide themselves into small bodies, and to endeavour to make their way to the capital in the manner least liable to suspicion, under the disguise of those trades and occupations in which the Irish, commonly resorting hither, are principally engaged. Their object is represented to have been, that of co-operating with the Corresponding Society, in effecting an insurrection in London, at the time of the rebellion breaking out in Ireland, for the purpose of distracting the military force, and preventing reinforcements being sent to that country; and the plan is said to have failed from the Corresponding society shrinking from the execution of it. About the same period, another project was secretly formed (of which your committee have received more distinct information) for collecting at one point, a chosen body of the most determined from among the United Irish employed on the river Thames, to whom a new oath of secrecy, obedience and fidelity, was to be administered. Large rewards were to be promised. They were to be kept wholly ignorant of the precise service they were intended to perform, till the moment of its execution, which was to take place as soon as an attack on some part of the coast, was announced on the part of the French. They were then to be privately armed with daggers, to be put under leaders of known talents and courage, and formed into three divisions, and were to make an attack, by surprise, at the same moment, on both Houses of Parliament, on the Tower, and on the Bank.

The intelligence obtained from time to time by government, respecting the proceedings and plans of the conspirators, the seizure and detention of some of the intended leaders, and perhaps the timidity or reluctance of some of the parties concerned, prevented any open attempt to realise these extravagant designs, when they were first in contemplation.

But, notwithstanding the continuance of every precaution, and although these conspirators cannot be ignorant of the prepared and formidable force, and the determined spirit and general loyalty with which such an enterprise would be immediately resisted, your committee have received undoubted proof that plans of this nature are now, more than ever, in agitation. Attempts are actually making, by agents from Ireland, to concert with the French government the time for a fresh and general insurrection in Ireland. Intelligence has been received, that in the ports of France the utmost diligence is used in preparing another expedition to co-operate with the rebels in that kingdom. The time for making this attempt, seems to be, in a great measure, fixed. The expectation which appears to be generally entertained among the traitors in

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Ireland tallies, in this respect, with the intelligence which has been laid before your committee; and this expectation has been particularly communicated from thence to their confederates in this country. It seems to be intended, at the same time to attempt a diversion by another French force on different parts of the coasts of this kingdom. The manner in which such expeditions are likely to be calculated to advance the ends of the conspirators, both in Great Britain and Ireland, and the species of warfare which the French have had in contemplation, will be sufficiently evident from a reference to the Instructions of Tate, who was made prisoner in Wales (which are printed in the Appendix to the Report made last session, on the treatment of prisoners of war) and to those of Humbert, who commanded the force which landed last year in Ireland, and who had also been destined to command an expedition against Cornwall, which are inserted in the Appendix to this Report (Nos. 27 and 28). For the purpose of co-operating with these attempts, and particularly with the same view as that to which the measures before enumerated were directed in the beginning of 1798, that of preventing, if possible, reinforcements being sent from hence to Ireland. It is also part of the plan, that an effort should be made to create an insurrection in the metropolis, and in some other parts of the kingdom where these societies are most numerous. Your committee are fully confident, that while plans of this nature continue to be traced and known, and while government retains the means which it at present possesses, such wild and desperate projects may be expected to lead only to consequences destructive to their authors. But your committee are at the same time so forcibly struck with the view they have had of this part of the system, and with the peculiar danger continually arising from the society of United Irishmen, which they deem to be in its nature incompatible with the secure maintenance of public tranquillity, that they have thought it necessary to bring it thus distinctly under the immediate consideration of the House.

Sect. 8.—Societies at Hamburgh.

In addition to this mass of treason, in Great Britain and in Ireland, your Committee find, that, for the purpose of more convenient communication between France and Ireland, a committee of United Irishmen has been formed at Hamburgh. That place has long been the receptacle of those disaffected persons who have fled from Great Britain or Ireland, either from apprehension of the consequences of the treasonable practices in which they have been engaged, or for the purpose of assisting the conspiracies carried on against their respective countries; and with the latter view it has been the centre of a correspondence, which has long subsisted among the British and Irish societies established at that place, as well as in London and Paris; and this correspondence with Great Britain and Ireland, has frequently been covered by the pretence of commercial transactions, or of communicating intelligence for the public newspapers.

Hamburgh has also been the resort of the disaffected of every other country, whose intrigues are constantly directed to the object of spreading the principles of Jacobinism in Holstein and the north of Germany, and generally in all the northern parts of Europe. Many emissaries, English, Scotch, and Irish, have been dispatched from time to time from Hamburgh to Great Britain and Ireland, and to various parts of the continent, as circumstances required. There has recently been established at Hamburgh, Altona, and the neighbourhood, a society called 'The Philanthropic Society' for the purpose of correspondence with the republicans of all countries upon the plan of the corresponding societies established in Great Britain and Ireland; and whose avowed object is, the reform of all kingdoms and states. The leading members of this society, who direct all the rest, compose a committee of about twenty persons, British, French, Dutch, and Germans. The members of the subordinate societies at Hamburgh and Altona are all under the control of the committee or principal society before-mentioned. This committee constantly corresponds with Great Britain and Ireland, and all parts of Germany. It has secretaries skilled in different languages, and corresponding agents in different towns, particularly in London. It may become a formidable engine in the hands of the French Directory, and it appears to be making considerable progress; but there is reason to hope that it has at length attracted the notice of the governments of those places.

Upon a review of all the circumstances which have come under the consideration of your committee, they are deeply impressed with the conviction—That the safety and tranquillity of these kingdoms have, at different periods from the year 1791 to the present time, been brought into imminent hazard, by the traitorous plans and practices of societies, acting upon the principles, and devoted to the views, of our inveterate foreign enemy:

That, although the Society of United Irishmen in Ireland, has alone been enabled to attain its full strength and maturity; yet the societies instituted on similar principles in this country had all an undoubted tendency to produce similar effects, if they had not been checked by the general demonstrations of the zeal and spirit of his majesty's faithful subjects, and by the timely and judicious use of those extraordinary powers, which parliament has, in its wisdom, from time to time confided to his majesty's government:

That, either directly or indirectly, a continual intercourse and connexion has been maintained between all these societies in Great Britain and Ireland, and that the real

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objects of the instigators of these proceedings, in both kingdoms, were no other than the entire overthrow of the British constitution, the general confiscation of property, and the erection of a democratic republic, founded on the ruins of all religion, and of all political and civil society, and framed after the model of France.

The vigorous resistance opposed to the rebellion in Ireland, the success of the measures which have been employed for detecting and defeating the designs of the conspirators here, and the general and ardent spirit of loyalty and attachment to the laws and constitution, have hitherto counteracted the progress of the mischief, and averted impending danger; but even these circumstances by no means appear to your Committee to justify the hope that the mischief is eradicated, or the danger passed.

The principles and views of the conspirators remain unchanged. Their reliance on the assistance and co-operation of France, by which they expect ultimately to effect their purposes, continues undiminished. And the system of those secret societies, which are at once the instruments of seditious conspiracy at home, and the channel of treasonable correspondence with France, though in many parts broken and interrupted, is by no means destroyed.

Your Committee have already referred to the positive information laid before them, stating that hostile preparations are now making, with extraordinary vigour and exertion, in some of the ports of France, for the invasion of this country, or of Ireland. The activity of seditious and treasonable societies, in their correspondence with France, and in their endeavours to gain proselytes here, keeps pace with the preparations of the enemy; and the principle of secrecy, generally enforced by unlawful oaths, which is the great characteristic of these societies, peculiarly fits them for the most desperate enterprizes, and by holding out a prospect of security, increases the means of seduction. It has, at the same time, an obvious tendency to elude detection, in the first instance, and to defeat legal inquiry in the next. To this principle, therefore, in the opinion of your Committee, such farther measures as parliament in its wisdom may think fit to adopt for the public safety, should be more immediately and decisively pointed.

Your Committee have seen, with satisfaction, the powers which, in conformity to the ancient practice and true principles of the constitution, have from time to time, as the urgency required, been confided to his majesty's government; and they feel it their duty particularly to remark, that the power of arresting and detaining suspected persons (a remedy so constantly resorted to by our ancestors in all cases of temporary and extraordinary danger) has, under the present new and unprecedented circumstances, been found particularly efficient. It has greatly interrupted and impeded the correspondence with the enemy, and has checked, from time to time, the progress and communication of sedition and treason at home. But from particular circumstances which have come under the observation of your Committee in the course of their inquiry, they feel it their duty to remark, that the good effects of this measure would be rendered more complete, and the public tranquillity better secured, if the leading persons who have been, or may be, hereafter detained on suspicion of treasonable practices, shall hereafter be kept in custody in places sufficiently distant from the metropolis.

The whole of the secret information which has been laid before your Committee, has strongly confirmed them in their opinion of the necessity of confiding these extraordinary powers to his majesty's government; and the very circumstances which created this necessity, and which continue at this time to operate more powerfully than ever, have rendered it their peculiar duty to abstain from disclosing, in its full extent, the particular information, of which they have stated to the House the general result, and on which their judgment is founded; but they trust that they have laid before the House sufficient grounds to justify their persuasion, that the multiplied and various attempts by which the enemies to their country carry on their dangerous conspiracies, can only be defeated by a corresponding vigilance on the part of government, and by the exercise of such additional powers, as may, from time to time, be entrusted to it by parliament, and may be best adapted to the peculiar exigency of the moment. And although your Committee do not think it any part of their province to suggest particular measures, the consideration of which must be left to the wisdom of parliament; they cannot forbear particularly and earnestly pressing their unanimous opinion, that the system of secret societies, the establishment of which has, in other countries, uniformly preceded the aggression of France, and, by facilitating the progress of her principles, has prepared the way for her arms, cannot be suffered to exist in these kingdoms, compatibly with the safety of their government, and constitution, and with their security against foreign force and domestic treason.

Your Committee have great satisfaction in adding, that if this growing and formidable evil can be effectually repressed, and if the same system of vigilance and precaution which has been successfully adopted for some years past, is adhered to, there is every reason to look forward with confidence to the ultimate disappointment and defeat of the projects which have been so long pursued by our foreign and domestic enemies. Impressed with a just sense of the blessings enjoyed under our happy constitution, which distinguish this country from every nation in Eu-

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rope, all ranks and conditions of society have shown their determination to preserve those blessings entire, and have stood forward with a becoming ardour and alacrity in their defence. While this laudable spirit continues to pervade every part of the kingdom, and while the wisdom of the legislature encourages and directs its exertions for the public safety, your committee entertain a full conviction that the religion, the laws, and the constitution of Great Britain, and with them the interests and happiness of all classes of his majesty's subjects, will, in the midst of surrounding danger and calamity, and in spite of every machination at home or abroad, rest under the protection of divine providence, on the surest basis, secured by the energy and firmness of the government, and by the courage, the patriotism, and the virtue, of the nation.

Extracts from App. (No. 1.)—Address from the Society of United Irishmen in Dublin, to the Delegates for promoting a Reform in Scotland. November 23d, 1792.

We take the liberty of addressing you in the spirit of civic union, in the fellowship of a just and common cause. We greatly rejoice that the spirit of freedom moves over the face of Scotland; that light seems to break from the chaos of her internal government; and that a country so respectable for her attainments in science, in arts, and in arms, for men of literary eminence, for the intelligence and morality of her people, now acts from a conviction of the union between virtue, letters, and liberty, and now rises to distinction; not by a calm, contented, secret wish for a reform in parliament, but by openly, actively, and urgently willing it, with the unity and energy of an embodied nation. We rejoice that you do not consider yourselves as merged and melted down into another country, but that in this great national question you are still Scotland—the land where Buchanan wrote, and Fletcher spoke, and Wallace fought.

Away from us, and from our children, those puerile antipathists so unworthy of the manhood of nations, which insulate individuals as well as countries, and drive the citizen back to the savage. We esteem and we respect you. We pay merited honour to a nation in general well educated and well informed, because we know that the ignorance of the people is the cause and effect of all civil and religious despotism. We honour a nation regular in their lives and strict in their manners, because we conceive private morality to be the only secure foundation of public policy. We honour a nation eminent for men of genius, and we trust that they will now exert themselves, not so much in perusing and penning the histories of other countries, as in making their own a subject for the historian. May we venture to observe to them that mankind have been too retrospective, canonized antiquity and undervalued themselves. Man has reposed on ruins, and rested his head on some fragments of the temple of Liberty, or at most amused himself in pacing the measurement of the edifice, and nicely limiting its proportions; not reflecting that this temple is truly Catholic, the ample earth its area, and the arch of heaven its dome.

We will lay open to you our hearts;—our cause is your cause. If there is to be a struggle between us, let it be which nation shall be foremost in the race of mind; let this be the noble animosity kindled between us, who shall first attain that free constitution from which both are equidistant, who shall first be the saviour of the empire.

In this society and its affiliated societies, the Catholic and the Presbyterian are at this instant holding out their hands and opening their hearts to each other; agreeing in principles, concurring in practice We unite for immediate, ample, and substantial justice to the Catholics, and when that is attained, a combined exertion for a reform in parliament is the condition of our compact, and the seal of our communion.

Universal Emancipation with Representative Legislature is the polar principle which guides our society, and shall guide it through all the tumult of factions and fluctuations of parties. It is not upon a coalition of opposition with ministry that we depend, but upon a coalition of Irishmen with Irishmen, and in that coalition alone we find an object worthy of reform, and at the same time the strength and sinew both to attain and secure it. It is not upon external circumstances, upon the pledge of man or minister, we depend, but upon the internal energy of the Irish nation. We will not buy or borrow liberty from America or from France, but manufacture it ourselves, and work it up with those materials which the hearts of Irishmen furnish them with at home. We do not worship the British, far less the Irish constitution, as sent down from heaven, but we consider it as human workmanship, which man has made, and man can mend. An unalterable constitution, whatever be its nature, must be despotism. It is not the constitution, but the people which ought to be inviolable, and it is time to recognize and renovate the rights of the English, the Scotch, and the Irish nations.—Rights which can neither be bought nor sold, granted by charter, or forestalled by monopoly, but which nature dictates as the birthright of all, and which it is the business of a constitution to define, to enforce, and to establish. If government has a sincere regard for the safety of the constitution, let them coincide with the people in the speedy reform of its abuses, and not by an obstinate adherence to them, drive that people into republicanism.

We have told you what our situation was, what it is, what it ought to be; our end, a national legislature; our means, a union of the whole people. Let this union extend

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throughout the empire. Let all unite for all, or each man suffer for all. In each country let the people assemble in peaceful and constitutional convention. Let delegates from each country digest a plan of reform, best adapted to the situation and circumstances of their respective nations, and let the legislatures be petitioned at once by the urgent and unanimous voice of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

You have our ideas Answer us, and that quickly. This is not a time to procrastinate. Your illustrious Fletcher has said, that the liberties of a people are not to be secured without passing through great difficulties, and no toil or labours ought to be declined to preserve a nation from slavery. He spoke well; and we add, that it is incumbent on every nation who adventures into a conflict for freedom to remember it is on the event (however absurdly) depends the estimation of public opinion; honour and immortality, if fortunate; if otherwise, infamy and oblivion. Let this check the rashness that rushes unadvisedly into the committal of national character, or if that be already made, let the same consideration impel us all to advance with active, not passive perseverance, with manly confidence and calm determination; smiling with equal scorn at the bluster of official arrogance and the whisper of private malevolence, until we have planted the flag of freedom on the summit, and are at once victorious and secure.

(Signed) William Drennan, Chairman.
Archibald Hamilton Rowan, Secretary.

App. (No. 2.)—The Report of the Committee of Constitution, of the London Corresponding Society. [Printed for the use of the members.] Sold by Thomas Spence, No. 8, Little Turnstile, High Holborn.

Fellow Citizens;—Knowing from experience, that those who (through the depraved state of what should be the representative body) are suffered to prey on the vitals of our country, derive the principal part of their success in opposing an equal representation from the active circulation of falsehoods, respecting this and other similar societies; we think it advisable, that you should give an explicit declaration of your principles and wishes, which we conceive to be as follows: 1. That all men are by nature free, equal, and independent of each other. 2. That to enjoy all the advantages of civil society, it is not necessary that individuals should relinquish more of their natural independence than is required to fulfil this injunction, "Let the minority yield a friendly submission to the majority." 3. That no majority, however great, can justly deprive the minority of any part of their civil rights; wherever it is attempted, the social bond is broken, and the minority have a right to resist. 4. The civil rights of every individual are equality of voice, in the making of laws, and in the choice of persons by whom those laws are to be administered.—Equality before the law, whether in claiming its protection or submitting to its sentence. Freedom to publish his opinion, to exercise his religious worship without molestation or restriction; and to enjoy his property, subject only to such contributions as may be impartially levied for the public service. 5. Submission to any measure, does not imply silence as to the propriety or impropriety thereof. 6. Every power entrusted to a magistrate, implies a responsibility for the exercise of that power. 7. The foregoing are not new, but are the original principles of English government. 8. The total departure from the principle of equality in the election of the legislative body, commonly called the House of Commons, is the chief cause why the people of Britain are now deprived of the benefit of the foregoing principles; and in place thereof labour under a continued system of extortion and monopoly. 9. The Corn Act—is a grievance immediately resulting from the restriction of the choice of representatives to men of landed property; by it the price of bread in general is doubled, and sometimes much more than doubled; for whenever this country happens to be blessed with an abundant season, a part of the taxes under which we groan is applied to encourage the exportation, and advance the price of corn. Thus we pay one tax to government, to give the landed man an opportunity of laying on another. The hackneyed pretence for this act is, "the welfare of the farmer." The real intention of it is, to enable the monopolizers of farms to pay enormous rents. 10. Game Laws—Though too evidently calculated to disarm the nation, may in general be attributed to the same restriction; by them, even the farmer, on whose property the game is fed, is robbed of every constitutional right of a Briton, and subjected to the brutality of a bashaw in the form of a country justice, from whom there is no appeal. 11. Excise Laws, and Stamp Duties (and the consequent system of spies and informers) equally repugnant to the professed principles of the constitution, and most extensive in their oppression; are often introduced merely as engines of corporation influence; for, in some instances, the produce of the tax does not pay the expense of collection; were the sense of the nation fairly taken, it is impossible to believe but that whatever sum might be necessary for the public service, it would be raised by means less obnoxious and less expensive. 12. The Mutiny Act—which would never have existed, had not the bulk of the people been excluded from representation. It reflects a charge of hypocrisy on those who affect to bewail the late events in France, yet calmly view the defenders of their own country subjected to every species of fraud, insult, and cruelty. The military excellence of true republicans, in all ages, proves it to be unnecessary. Convince a Briton, that he is about to fight for a country in which his rights are duly con-

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sulted, and the cat of nine tails may be burnt by the hands of the common hangman. 13. The Impress Service—equally cruel with the foregoing, is another effect of partial representation: It has lately been proved, that the expense of this service, if applied to increase the seamen's pay, would render impressing unnecessary; but it is more consistent with the government of a faction, to distribute the sum among the officers of corporations. 14. The ill effects of partial representation are not confined to men in private stations: We challenge contradiction when we assert, that, in general, promotion, whether in the army, navy, or church, is the effect of parliamentary connexion, and the reward of parliamentary prostitution. 15. We cannot entertain a doubt, that the foregoing statement of grievances will be admitted as just by our countrymen at large, and also that an equal representation, by universal and annual suffrage, would tend immediately to redress them. It remains to prove that the difficulties said to attend such a scheme are merely the chimerical inventions of interested men. 16. Let us suppose all partial corporations (those badges of slavery) abolished, and consider the whole island as one corporation, divided into counties or cities, for the purposes of embodying and exercising militia, &c. and for electing representatives, subdivided into districts or townships, as nearly as convenient, in equal proportion to the number of inhabitants. 17. Allow to each district or township one representative, and let it be subdivided into parishes, and every man intitled to a vote be registered in the parish in which he resides. Large parishes may be subdivided into wards or hamlets. 18. Let every voter give his vote in the parish in which he resides; let the votes be brought in writing, and called for in succession, either alphabetically, by the names of the voters, or numerically, by the wards and numbers of houses;—either of these methods would prevent that source of riot, the practice of voting in party groups. 19. The truth of entry of every individual vote in each parish would easily be examined and the totals of the several parishes in each district so easily collected, that we scruple not to assert, a general election might be decided with indisputable certainty, in twelve hours. 20. In saying the whole island should be considered as one corporation, we do not wish to be understood as recommending that districts should choose their representatives from distant parts. On the contrary, we think the representative should always be a resident of the district, as his character would be better known to his constituents. Hearsay characters are seldom any other than the blazonings of faction. 21. It is indispensable to good government, that representatives should be paid for their service to the public. The want of open and honourable reward retards the exertion of laudable characters, and subjects the nation to the fraudulent and delusive practices of mock patriots. 22. To those who are convinced of the propriety of the foregoing ideas, and only ask, how shall we attain the practice of them? We answer, associate. By so doing you will better correct and strengthen each other's opinions on the subject of liberty, and eventually abash the tools of corrupt influence and lawless power. Effects which are not to be expected from the vague and desultory exertion of individual opinions. Having thus stated what we conceive to be the sentiments of the society, we recommend, that the members shall meet in divisions, consisting, as nearly as convenient, of thirty members each; and that the management of its affairs be vested in one Committee of Delegates, one Select Committee, and one council, subject to reference to the divisions and Trial by Jury, as more particularly defined in the following sections.

Sect. 1.—Form of admission and duty of a member.—1. Each candidate for admission into this society shall be proposed by a member, who shall either belong to the division in which the proposal is made, or be personally known as a member of this society to two members of such division. 2. The secretary shall enter the name, residence and occupation of the candidate, together with the proposer's name and number in the minute book of the division, and the president shall put the following question to the proposer;

"Are you well acquainted with the candidate you propose, with his means of life, and his political principles, and are you well assured that his general character is such as will not be disgraceful to this society?" 3. If the proposer shall answer the foregoing question in the affirmative, the president shall demand of the division, whether any member has any objection to the candidate. 4. If no objection satisfactory to the division shall be made, the president shall put the following questions to the candidate:

"Are you convinced, that every man who has attained to years of discretion, is in possession of his reason, and not disqualified by crimes, ought to have a vote for a representative, and not more than one vote? Are you convinced, that the representation ought to be divided as nearly as possible in proportion to the number of electors? Are you convinced, that the election of representatives of the people ought to be annual? Will you by all justifiable means endeavour to promote a reform in the parliament of this country, agreeable to the principles which you have now professed? 5. The candidate having answered the foregoing questions in the affirmative, shall be declared a member, and shall receive a ticket, on which shall be endorsed his name, and the time to which his contribution is paid; and another ticket, on which shall be written in large figures the number of his division; and beneath that, his own number in the division. 6. It shall be at his option to wear the latter ticket in a visible situation in any meeting of

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this society; and it is particularly adviseable that he should wear it in general meetings, and keep with the members of his own division. 7. Every member shall pay 6d. at the meeting of his division, next before the first Thursday in each calendar month, or after that rate for so long as he shall think proper to renew his ticket, to defray the expenses of this society, and of the room in which his division meets. 8. The last article shall not preclude any member from furnishing a larger contribution, as he may judge proper, either periodically or occasionally; but such extra contribution shall not give the member any additional power. 9. It is the duty of every member to study concord, and for that purpose to moderate his own passions, particularly his personal attachments and aversions. 10. To make himself well acquainted with the principles, constitution, and laws of this society, and to circulate a knowledge of the same to the utmost of his ablity. 11. To attend his own division as constantly as possible, and particularly on the meeting next before the first Thursday in each calendar month. 12. During the discussion of any question, it is the duty of every member to give a close and candid attention to the opinions which are given on it, and also to give his own opinion freely, unless it shall correspond exactly with one already given. 13. In giving his vote, which is the declaration of his final opinion, he ought to be guided solely by his own conviction, totally disregarding the chance of his being in a minority or majority, even though he should stand alone. 14. When decision is taken by a show of hands, every member shall give his vote silently, by showing one hand: the practice of showing both hands, or of calling all! all! or other such exclamations, are tumultuous, indecent and utterly unwarrantable. 15. In case his division shall be dispersed by persecution, he shall use every endeavour to rally the members of it; but if unsuccessful in this attempt, he may then join any division which may persevere in meeting. 16. To habituate himself, both in and out of this society, to an orderly and amicable manner of reasoning, but especially to observe the following Rules of

Order.—1. That no member ought to be interrupted while speaking, unless for the purpose of calling him to order. 2. All noise is interruption, whether intended to express applause or censure; approbation may be expressed by holding up a hand. 3. To attribute the conduct or opinion of any member to factious combination, or other improper motive, is disorderly; as are also all invectives and declamatory remarks. 4. The foregoing is not intended to curtail the power of accusation, agreeably to the XIth section of this constitution, but only that such accusation shall not interfere with any other question. 5. No member shall be allowed to speak longer than ten minutes at one time, nor more than twice to one question, except to explain or retract. 6. No member shall be allowed to style himself, or any other, by any party name, whether intended to convey respect or disrespect. 7. All political appellations, which do not in their immediate interpretation convey an idea of political sentiment or situation, are party names. The following do not fall under this objection, as will appear by their explanations. *Republican*—One who wishes to promote the general welfare of his country. *Democrat*—A supporter of the rights and power of the people. *Aristocrat*—One who wishes to promote the interest of a few at the expense of many. *Royalist*—Among the ignorant part of mankind signifies a person attached to regal government: among artful courtiers it is a veil for their own Aristocracy. *Loyalist*—A supporter of the constitution of his country. *Citizen*—The ancient appellation given to the members of free states. *Subject*—Can only with propriety be applied to a member of a state, whose government has been instituted by foreign conquest, or the prevalence of a domestic faction. 17. Persons attempting to trespass on order, under pretence of showing zeal, courage or any other motive, are to be suspected. A noisy disposition is seldom a sign of courage, and extreme zeal is often a cloak of treachery.

Sect. 2.—The organization and power of a division.—1. Each division shall meet once in a week, on any evening in the week except Thursday and Sunday. 2. The hour and place of meeting shall be at the convenience of each division, but must be announced to the constituted bodies. 3. Each division shall elect, from its own members, a president, vice-president, secretary, assistant secretary, delegate, and sub-delegate. 4. Each division shall be furnished with three books, (viz.) One to bear the number of the division; a similar book, to be called the supernumerary book of the same division; and a third for entering minutes. 5. No division book shall contain more than 30 effective names; subject to variation as hereafter mentioned. 6. Members admitted after the division shall amount to 30, shall be entered in the supernumerary book, but not before. As soon as the members entered in the supernumerary book, shall amount to sixteen, they shall be entitled to a number as a new division; they shall determine the time and place of their future meeting; they shall receive a supernumerary book and a minute book; and a new supernumerary book shall be delivered to the original division. 8. Members entered in any supernumerary book, while less than 16 shall be entitled to vote, and in every respect to be considered as members of the division to which such supernumerary book shall belong. 9. No new member shall have a vote the same sitting in which he is admitted; nor transferred member the same sitting in which he is transferred. 10. Each division shall be

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allowed one shilling and sixpence per week for rent, furniture, &c. 11. Every member shall have liberty to introduce one stranger, provided such member shall answer that the sentiments of the stranger are similar to ours; and the same stranger shall not be introduced more than twice, except for the purpose of admission as a member. 12. If two or more divisions shall agree to meet at the same time and place, the following rules shall be observed: 13. One supernumerary book shall serve the whole meeting, which shall be kept by the secretary of the oldest division present. 14. No new member shall be entered in the supernumerary book, while any division present is short of 30 members. 15. One president and vice-president shall serve the whole meeting. 16. Each division alternately shall elect, from its own members, the president and vice-president: and the assistant secretary of each division, alternately, shall act as door-keeper. 17. They shall not intermix their elections of delegates or sub-delegates, secretaries, or assistant secretaries, nor the reports of their opinions on referred questions. 18. Members entered in the supernumerary book, shall be entitled to vote, and in every respect considered as members of the oldest division present. 19. In all elections, and decisions of referred question, the president shall take the decision of the oldest division first. 20. The term oldest division is not meant to convey any idea of precedency; it is to be understood, that division which shall bear the smallest number, though it may have been formed later than one bearing a greater, 21. The delegates and secretaries of divisions, so meeting shall not sit together, but dispersed as nearly as convenient at equal distances. 22. Over the seat of the president in each meeting of this society, shall be suspended a label with these words, "Beware of Orators." 23. In case of persecution, and that the means provided by the 7, 8, 9, sections of this constitution, should not produce the effect of re-establishing a representative body of this society for two weeks successively, every division shall have power to elect four persons, whose powers shall be the same as the four officers of the committee of delegates: 24. The sole object of those four persons, shall be the re-establishment of the representative body, and they shall report progress weekly, and be weekly subject to revocation. 25. If two or more divisions shall make the above-mentioned election at the same time, the persons so chosen shall act in conjunction.

Sect. 3.—Mode of Election.—1. The ordinary election of delegate and sub-delegate shall be on the sitting next before the first Thursday in each calendar month, at which sitting no visitor shall be admitted. 2. No member shall be allowed to offer himself as a candidate, nor to propose any other, nor solicit votes for himself or another on pain of expulsion. 3. Every member, except such as have served as delegates for the two preceding months, such as have not been admitted a fortnight, and such as are members of any constituted body, or excused by a previous consent of the division, shall be considered as eligible. 4. On the evening of election, each member shall bring with him a piece of paper, on which shall be written the name of the member whom he wishes to be the delegate, and beneath that the name and number of the voter. 5. Such vote shall be given to the president, without previous communication to any other member. 6. Precisely at nine o'clock, after which no vote shall be received, the president shall read the votes aloud; the secretary shall enter in the minute book the names of all the members nominated, and against each the numbers of the members who have voted for him. 7. The president shall read the secretary's entry aloud, and if no error be discovered in it, shall declare whichever of the nominated persons shall have the greatest number of votes to be the delegate, and the next greatest the sub-delegate. 8. Upon any equality of votes, the decision shall be by lot. 9. The election of secretary and assistant secretary, shall be on the same night, and conducted in the same manner. 10. Every member, except the delegate and sub-delegate, is eligible as secretary or assistant secretary. 11. The election of president and vice-president, may be by open nomination and show of hands.

Sect. 4.—Duty of President and Vice-President.—1. The preservation of order, though a duty of every member, is particularly so of the president. 2. He shall take especial care to protect any member from interruption while speaking, provided such member shall confine his discourse to the matter in question, and not exceed ten minutes in delivering it. 3. If any member (thinking the president remiss) shall call another to order, that call shall not be repeated by any other member. The president, if aware of the reason of such call, shall give his opinion on the point of order; if not aware of any sufficient reason for the interruption, he shall require the member calling to order to explain his reasons. 4. The general call of silence is the exclusive duty of the president; any other member calling silence is disorderly. 5. If he shall find it convenient he may, previous to putting any question, recapitulate impartially the arguments which have been offered on it; at which time, and not before, he may give his own opinion. 6. He shall take especial care that the members be satisfied, that the monthly account of the principal treasurer contains a receipt for as much money as has been raised in the division or divisions present. 7. Previous to quitting the chair, he shall read the minutes as entered by the secretary, and sign them. 8. If any part of them shall appear to him to be erroneously entered, he shall notice the impropriety in the minute book. 9. He shall, on no account, continue

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in the chair later than eleven o'clock, P. M.; after that hour the persons present are a private company, and not a division of this society. 10. The vice-president shall be placed in that part of the room which is opposite to the president. 11. His duty is to take care that members shall not be imperfectly acquainted with the business in agitation, in consequence of their being remote from the president, and that they shall not fall into private and disorderly conversations.

Sect. 5.—Secretary, and Assistant Secretary.—1. The secretary of each division shall also be treasurer of the same. He shall remain in office (misconduct excepted) one month, and be re-eligible. 2. He shall open the business of each meeting, by taking election of a president and vice-president, for which purpose he shall not wait longer than 15 minutes after the appointed time. 3. He shall then give the minutes of the last meeting to the president to be read, including the former president's objections, if any, and they shall then be adjusted. 4. He shall enter in the minute book every motion which shall be made and seconded; also the decision on it, with the numbers of votes both for and against. 5. He shall keep the division and supernumerary books, and receive the monthly payments. 6. If any member default in payment, he shall give notice of the same, at the first meeting, after the first Thursday in each calendar month; and if no other member is willing to call on the defaulter, it shall be his business. 7. After the president he shall sign all resolutions of the division, and all certificates of election. 8. All certificates shall specify the number of votes as given. The word unanimous shall never be used. 9. At the meeting next before the election of delegate, the secretary shall read a list of the names of such members as are ineligible by this constitution; to which shall be added the names of such members as may give reasons satisfactory to the division for wishing to be excused serving that office. 10. If any member shall default in payment for one month successively, without a cause satisfactory to the division be assigned, the secretary shall notice the default opposite to his name in the minute book, and his number shall be given to the next admitted member. 11. If he cannot attend his duty in his division, he shall give notice to the assistant secretary, and send the books to him or to the division. 12. The assistant secretary shall, to the utmost of his power, assist the secretary in his duty, particularly in calling on defaulters. 13. When the secretary is present in a division, the assistant secretary shall act as doorkeeper; the duty of that station is explained by sect. 2. Art. 11. 14. In the absence of secretary or assistant secretary, the meeting shall appoint another doorkeeper. 15. In case of removal or violent dispersion of a division, it shall be the business of the secretary and assistant secretary to give notice to the members of a new place and time of meeting.

Sect. 6.—Delegate and Sub-Delegate.—1. Every individual delegate is the immediate servant of the division which he represents, and his functions cannot be annulled or suspended but by their consent, unless expelled the society by Trial of Jury, agreeably to the 11th section. 2. While a delegate he is not eligible to any other station or office, either by his division or any constituted body. 3. His duty is to attend the meeting of delegates, and assist in the performance of their collective duty, as hereafter described. 4. To attend his own division duly, and faithfully to report proceedings of the committee of delegates. 5. To compare the account of the principal treasurer with that of the treasurer of his own division, and to remark to his division whether they agree or no. 6. On all questions which may occur in the committee of delegates, he shall vote according to the instructions of his constituents. 7. On any question which has not been discussed and decided by his constituents, he shall vote according to his own judgment for the interest of the society. 8. If on any question which his constituents have decided, new arguments should arise which he may think likely to change their opinion, he shall have liberty to vote for an adjournment of one week, subject however to the judgment of the division, whether his doubts were real or fictitious. 9. If he cannot attend the meeting of delegates, he shall give notice as early as possible to the sub-delegate. 10. The sub-delegate having received such notice, shall act as delegate. 11. The sub-delegate shall always be admissible in the committee of delegates as a visitor.—12., While present as a visitor he must be silent but may take notes. 13. The sub-delegate attending the committee before the delegate, though without notice, shall act as delegate for that sitting, whenever the delegate is more than ten minutes later than the appointed time. 14. If the delegate should vacate his seat, the sub-delegate shall succeed him for the remainder of the month, and another sub-delegate shall be chosen.

Sect. 7.—The Committee of Delegates.—1. The committee of delegates is the representative and legislative body of this society. 2. Their duty is indivisible, and the representation shall not be impaired by any appointment, either of themselves collectively or of any other constituted body, which may subject the members thereof to be absent from their meeting, or to be parties concerned in any subject under their discussion. 3. Not less than three-fourths of their whole number shall be a quorum, except in case of persecution. 4. There shall be no disparity or dissimilitude between the members, by offices of presidency or secretaryship. 5. Every committee of delegates shall, on the last Thursday in each calendar month, elect four persons to serve the offices of president, vice-president, secretary, and assistant secretary, in the next ensuing committee. 6. Members of the electing

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committee are eligible as officers of the ensuing, and officers of electing shall be re-eligible. 7. This election is their final act collectively; individually they must report at the ensuing meetings of their constituents, which done, they invariably cease to be delegates, and shall not be re-eligible for two succeeding months. 8. The duty of the four officers above-mentioned, is similar to those bearing the same names in a division; but they shall have no vote in the committee, nor give any opinion, unless requested, except on questions of order. 9. After forming the committee, by receiving and entering their certificates, they shall each be subject to dismission, if the then present committee should think proper to appoint others. 10. The entries in the minute-book shall be signed at least by two of them, and the minutes of each meeting shall be read in the ensuing meeting, and open to the inspection of every individual delegate. 11. In case of any persecution which may be brought on this society, they shall provide a place for the meeting of delegates, and give notice thereof to as many delegates as possible. 12. Such meeting, not being fewer than one-third of the delegates, shall have all the power of a committee of delegates; but shall on no pretence enlarge the term of their delegation. 13. The especial object of such meeting shall be to see that the executive powers are not negligent or dilatory in rallying the dispersed divisions, and renewing a complete representative body. 14. The duty of the committee of delegates, is to direct the conduct of the executive powers, in all matters which do not require secrecy or expedition. 15. To examine the conduct of the executive powers, whether it be agreeable to their own directions, or the directions of any former committee of delegates. 16. If the executive power shall have done any thing without consent of a committee of delegates, it shall, on discovery, be the business of the then committee of delegates to examine whether the act was proper, and whether the want of such authority was justifiable by the necessity of secrecy or dispatch. 17. Their consent to any thing proposed to be done, or their approbation of any thing which has been done by the executive powers, shall be to the latter a complete justification, except such consent or approbation shall be obtained by misrepresentation of facts. 18. They shall take special notice of the conduct of every individual member, both of the select committee and the council; and if they shall perceive any personal opposition to prevail between any two members of those bodies, they shall take the first opportunity to remove them both, rather than endanger the spreading of discord. 19. For the purpose of electing members of the select committee and special committees, they shall always have a complete list of the names and numbers of the select committee then existing. 20. They may enter in their minute book remarks on the conduct, whether moral or political, of any member of the select committee, or of the council, or any person eligible to those stations. 21. If the executive powers, for the purpose of obtaining their approbation, shall communicate any thing which a majority of the delegates shall approve as necessary to be secretly done, the whole committee of delegates are bound to secrecy. 22. Their election of one third of the council, and of the select committee, shall be conducted in the same manner as the election of a delegate.

Sect. 8.—The select committee 1. Shall not exceed the whole, nor be less than half the number of the committee of delegates. 2. Every individual member of this committee is the servant of the whole society, and not responsible to any particular division. 3. They shall, at their first institution, be numbered by lot, from one to the number of their total. 4. On the last Thursday in each month one-third of them shall be put to the vote of the committee of delegates either to be re-elected, or others appointed in their place. viz. 1st month, No. 1, 4, 7, 10; 2nd. month, No. 2, 5, 8, 12; 3rd month, No. 3, 6, 9, 12, and so on, adding 3 to the last number. 5. No person shall be eligible who has not been a member of this society three months. 6. No member shall be allowed to change his number. 7. Their appointments of presidency or secretaryship shall be from their own members, and at their own discretion as to permanence. 8. No member of this committee shall be admitted until he has answered in the affirmative the following question, which shall be put by the officers of the committee of delegates: "Do you promise that you will not relinquish the station which you are about to take in this society, on account of any persecution which may be brought on it. That you will persevere in meeting the select committee, and to the utmost of your power encourage every other member of this society to fulfil the duty of his respective station?"

Their office is, 1. Preparatory, as they may be directed, either collectively, partially, or individually, by the committee of delegates, or the council. 2. Referential, as to any matter adopted by the committee of delegates, or the council, or by both, which they may judge improper. 3. All intended publications of this society shall, previous to being printed, undergo their collective examination. 4. One third of their whole number shall be a quorum.

Sect. 9.—The Council,—1. Shall be composed of one treasurer, one principal secretary, and not less than four assistant secretaries. 2. They shall be numbered from one to their total, and re-eligible at the same time and in the same manner as the Select Committee. 3. The treasurer shall, on the last Thursday in each calendar month, give to the committee of delegates a monthly account of the total sum which he shall have received

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from each division in the course of the instant month. 4. He shall also give to the select committee, at their meeting next before the last Thursday in March, June, September, and December, a quarterly account of all monies received by him on account of this society, and all disbursements. 5. His quarterly account, with the remarks of the select committee, if any, shall be laid before the committee of delegates on the last Thursday in March, June, September, and December, to be by them examined and reported to the divisions. 6. The principal secretary shall record all laws which shall be made by this society, which shall be printed annually. 7. He shall prepare all miscellaneous correspondence, namely, all such as does not fall within the department of one or other of the assistant secretaries, and all copies of such correspondence, for the use of the divisions. 8. Each assistant secretary shall have his particular department of correspondence assigned to him. 9. As soon as any letter is received, it shall be the business of the secretary, to whose department it shall belong, to prepare an answer. 10. The draught of the answer shall be first submitted to the select committee. 11. It shall next, with the objections and proposed amendments of the select committee, if any, be laid before the committee of delegates. 12. If the committee of delegates shall think necessary to order any alterations, they shall signify the same in writing signed by two of their officers. 13. Every member of the council shall be really acquainted with every transaction of this society, however secret. 14. Each member of the council shall have a complete list of the members of every division of this society, with their residences, which list he shall deposit to the best of his judgment, in a place of safety. 15. Collectively, the councils shall have a power of reference to the divisions, as to any proposal adopted by the committee of delegates, or select committee. 16. It shall be the business of the council to make inquiry for proper places for divisions to meet, and to recommend transfers of members for the purpose of forming new divisions, or strengthening such as may decay. 17. All letters of this society shall be signed at least by two of the council, who shall also sign the copy kept. 18. All letters sent with consent of the delegates and select committee, shall be signed "For the London Corresponding Society." All letters sent without such consent, shall be signed "For the Council of the London Corresponding Society.' 19. No letter shall be sent without previous consent of the council collectively, and not less than two-thirds shall be a quorum. 20. For any special purpose they may require the assistance of any member of this society, not being a delegate or sub-delegate.

Sect. 10.—General Articles including Reference—1. Every proposal which shall be severally approved by a majority of the delegates of the select committee, and of the council, shall be adopted and considered as an act of this society, and remain in force as such, until rescinded either by the concurrence of similar majorities, or by reference to the divisions. 2. The concurrence of such majorities shall be sufficient to degrade any member of the select committee or of the council, previous to the ordinary period of election; as shall also a reference to the divisions; provided always that the party objected to, shall have full opportunity of exculpating himself. 3. The concurrence of a majority of each of the three constituted bodies, shall be sufficient to alter the 5th article of the 2nd section, by making the number of members required to form a division more or less, provided there shall always be a number ascertained, beyond which no member shall be entered in any division book, and provided that the number required for instituting a division, shall always be one more than half the number at which a division shall be accounted full. 4. If it shall appear beneficial to the society, to institute a new division in a place where a sufficient number of members cannot at first be obtained, or to continue an old division, which may have decreased below the number required, the constituted bodies shall have power notwithstanding the deficiency of number, to make the usual allowance for rent, &c. but not longer than three months, unless specially authorized by reference to the divisions; and provided there shall never be more than one-third of the whole number of divisions of this description. 5. Not more than one half of the select committee shall at any time be detached on special committees, either by the counsel or the delegates. 6. Referred questions shall never be accompanied by deputations; they shall come in the same form before each division; namly, a copy of the question, and of such remarks as the party concerned shall think proper to make on it. 7. The remarks shall be in numbered articles, free from declamation or panegyric. 8. On all questions intended for reference, each of the constituted bodies shall have an opportunity of sending out its remarks; but, for this purpose, the whole of them shall not be allowed longer than one week. 9. If a question be referred, at the instance of an individual, he shall provide as many copies of the question, and of his own remarks, as may be necessary to supply all the divisions. 10. Any individual providing such copies, and demanding a reference shall not be denied. 11. If a question be referred at the instance of a division, or by one or more of the constituted bodies, the copies shall be provided by the respective secretaries. 12. The report on a referred question shall not be required in less than two weeks, from the Thursday on which the copies of question and remarks, complete, shall have been given to the delegates. 13. The delegates having received such

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copies, shall communicate them in the next meeting of their respective divisions. Each division may then discuss the question, but shall not decide it until the next meeting at soonest. 14. No member shall be allowed to speak on a referred question, except in the division of which he is a member. 15. The expenses of all the constituted bodies shall be paid from the general stock.

Sect. 11.—Of Accusation and Trial. 1. If any member shall think another unworthy of being a member of this society, or that he has acted in any degree improperly, he shall offer his accusation in writing, signed by himself, in the division of which the accused is a member. 2. Every accusation shall state the law on which it is grounded. 3. If the decision of the division shall be in favour of the accused, the trial shall go no farther; if not, the accuser shall give a statement of the case in writing to the delegate of his own division, to be laid before the committee of delegates. 4. No vote or resolution touching any matter of accusation, shall pass in any division, except that of the accused (as mentioned in the last article) nor in any of the constituted bodies. 5. The delegates having received the case, shall elect four persons, not of their own body, nor of the division or divisions concerned, to act as president, secretary, vice-president, and assistant secretary in the ensuing trial. 6. They shall also issue notices to each division, except those of which the accuser or accused are members, mentioning the time and place of trial, and the four persons whom they have appointed to superintend it, and requiring each of them to return one juryman. 7. Each division shall return of its own members one juryman by lot; but none of the four persons appointed to superintend the trial, nor any member of any constituted body, shall be returnable. 8. Every juryman so drawn, and failing to attend at the appointed time, shall forfeit two shillings and sixpence, except in case of sickness; as shall also each superintendant. 9. The superintendants shall, by lot, take twelve names out of the whole number present, who shall be the jury for that trial, unless the accused object, which he may do to four of them, but not more. 10. The accuser and accused shall each be allowed one assistant, at their own choice. 11. The president shall read the accusation, and call on the accuser to produce his evidence. 12. The evidence on the part of the accuser being closed, the accused may call his evidence. 13. During the time each witness is giving his evidence, he may be cross-examined by the jury, the president, the accused, the accuser, or either of their assistants. 14. The evidence being closed, the accused and his assistant shall be allowed to comment on it, and make his defence; but the cross-examination shall be deemed sufficient on the part of the accuser. 15. If the president shall think proper, he may recapitulate the principal points of the evidence, and comment on them. 16. The jury shall give their verdict in writing, signed by all their names. 17. If the jury shall not, within two hours agree that the accused is guilty, he shall be acquitted. 18. The issue of the trial shall be reported to the committee of delegates, and by them to the divisions.

App. (No. 3.)—Letter for introducing Citizens Binns and John Gale Jones; dated Committee room, March 1796; and signed J. Ashley, Secretary.

Citizens;—This letter is to introduce citizens Binns and John Gale Jones to you, they being deputed by us to visit your society. They will lay before you the instructions we have given them for their conduct, by which you will see the principal parts of our view of the common object which unites us to you, and the other societies in the country. We hope they accord with your sentiments; for we are persuaded that nothing is wanting to obtain such a reform in parliament as we demand but a strict union among those who are already convinced of its necessity. We are not, however, to contemn or neglect those whose interest, whose passions, or whose ignorance, have set them in opposition to us. For the latter, those who are separated from us only by their positive ignorance, we shall gain them daily to our side by a clear statement of our claims. The proposition we maintain is so simple, that no one can reject it who possesses even an ordinary share of understanding. The political creeds which people are taught during their childhood frequently warp their minds; but in Britain, the first article of the political creed is, that every individual who is subject to government is represented, and has a right to be represented in the legislature. We assert no more than that the practice does not at present correspond with the theory, and we claim no more than the restitution of these our rights; and it is this fact of which we have to convince the ignorant; for those who have partial interests and passions to gratify in the continuance of abuse, we must contend with them firmly. If we can soften their opposition, it is our duty; and if we cannot, on their own heads be the guilt and the effect. Citizens, let us redouble our zeal. Indifference in any cause belonging to humanity is base, in this it is nothing less than insanity. We recommend our deputies to your confidence, for we believe they are worthy of it.

App. (No. 4.)—Instructions of the London Corresponding Society to Citizen John Gale Jones, deputed to visit the Societies of Birmingham, &c.

Citizen;—This society having resolved that deputies be sent to the several societies in correspondence with us, in order to inform them accurately of the present state of the important question agitated by them and us,

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and to consult with them on the most effectual means of convincing the people of this country of the necessity of a reform in the Commons House of parliament, we have chosen you to be among the number of such deputies, having a firm confidence that you will conduct yourself so as to bring no just reproach upon us your constituents. To acquit ourselves, however, before the whole nation in this momentous concern, as well as the better to enable you to prosecute our legal and virtuous purpose, we furnish you with the following instructions: 1. On your admission to a society in union with us, you shall deliver the letter of introduction given you herewith, and submit these instructions to their perusal, in order that no improper person, being either an ignorant advocate of our cause, or a base pretender of, for mischievous purposes may intrude himself upon such society in our name. 2. You shall precisely state to such society, that the sole object of our association is a reform in the Commons House of parliament. 3. You shall insist that the only effectual, as well as only legitimate mode of obtaining our common object, is by convincing our fellow citizens of our natural and constitutional right to such reform, and of the necessity of our obtaining it, to preserve the nation from falling under the yoke of an absolute despotism; in so doing you cannot fail to draw the nation over to our side, and to leave the enemies of reform narrowed to the circle of corrupt ministers, and their rapacious dependants. 4. You shall show that the new Treason and Sedition acts, whatever be the character that will be stamped upon them by posterity, have not taken away the means of enlightening our fellow citizens on the above subject, since under these acts citizens may assemble to the number of forty-nine in one place, to converse in an orderly manner on their constitutional rights, and therefore cannot be disturbed without a violation of law even as it stands at present. 5. As the subtle malice of our enemies will endeavour to lead our fellow citizens from the peaceable course which it yet becomes us to pursue, you shall invite the society to guard against all persons who would introduce violent propositions, or any illegal measures. 6. It behoves you notwithstanding to convince the timid, that no fears are to be entertained respecting the legal consequences of the information of spies, since the security of the friends of reform is in the legality of their object and proceedings. 7. The design of the above articles is, to remove misapprehensions relative to the safety of our association under the new laws. This part of your mission being effected, you are to strain every power of your mind to awaken the sleeping spirit of liberty; you are to call upon our fellow citizens to be ready with us to pursue our common object, if it must be, to the scaffold, or rather (if our enemies are desperate enough to bar up every avenue to inquiry and discussion) to the field, at the hazard of extermination, convinced that no temper, less decided than this, will suffice to regain liberty from a bold usurping faction; but to the end that we may succeed by the irresistible voice of the people, you are to excite in every society the desire which animates our bosoms to embrace the nation as brethren, and the resolution to bear every repulse from passion and prejudice which fails to deprive us of the sure grounds of argument. 8. As the Whig Club have called upon the people to associate for the repeal of the new Treason and Sedition bills, without making any explicit declaration of their principles, we recommend you to caution the society you visit, against every attempt to divert their thoughts from our ultimate object to such temporary and subordinate considerations. 9. You shall, if called upon, aid the society with your advice, in forming their internal regulations, but by no means shall attempt to impose any rule upon them, much less to intrude the particular parts of our constitution, where local considerations may make it prudent to adopt others. 10. You shall invite the society to a close correspondence with us, and to transmit to us a monthly report, containing their numbers, and a concise account of their leading transactions. 11. You shall invite the society to take the name of the United Corresponding Society of Birmingham, and to adopt our regulations as far as may be consistent with their particular convenience or situation. 12. This society being involved in great expenses, and being in actual arrear, you shall in an open and manly manner invite the society to contribute to the expense of the deputation according to their ability, and to transmit their contributions through your hands to our secretary. 13. You shall write to us immediately after your first interview with the society, and at least once a week afterwards, and if any thing should occur to which these instructions do not apply, you shall write to us specially on the subject. In a word, you are always to reflect, that you are wrestling with the enemies of the human race, not for yourself merely, for you may not see the full day of liberty, but for the child hanging at the breast; and that the question whether the next generation shall be free or not, may greatly depend on the wisdom and integrity of your conduct in the generous mission which you and your fellow deputies now take upon yourselves. 14. The Society of Birmingham, &c. being numerous, you shall concert measures with the secretary for convening the members in divisions, consisting of forty-nine each; and you shall on no account meet more than forty-nine members at one time. 15. As our letters have been frequently intercepted by our enemies, before your departure from London you shall learn of the citizen secretary the place to which you shall direct your letters, and shall establish with the society a proper channel for corresponding with

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us. 16. You shall keep a journal of your proceedings in the discharge of this duty, and shall present the same to this committee on your return.

Citizens; while you recommend a legal conduct to the society, we solemnly call upon you to be yourself the example of sobriety in conversation and manners.—By order of the Executive Committee, John Ashley, Sec.

App. (No. 5.)—Copy of Hand-bill distributed by Henry Fellows, at Maidstone.

To the British Army:—Comrades, are we not men? Is it not high time we should prove we know ourselves to be such? Are we any where respected as men, and why are we not? Have not wrong notions of discipline led us to our present despised condition? Is there a man among us who does not wish to defend his country, and who would not willingly do it without being subject to the insolence and cruelty of effeminate puppies? Were not the sailors like us mocked for want of thought, though not so much despised for poverty as we are? Have they not proved that they can think and act for themselves, and preserve every useful point of discipline full as well or better than when under the tyranny of their officers? What makes this difference between a commissioned officer and a private or non-commissioned? Are they better men? You must laugh at the thought. Do they know discipline half so well as our serjeants? Don't they owe their promotions to their connexions with placemen and pensioners, and a mock parliament which pretends to represent the people? When we think of the people, ought not each of us to think of a father or a brother as part of them? Can you think a parliament speaking like fathers and brothers would treat us as we are treated? Would they mock us with a pretended addition to our pay, and then lock us up in barracks to cheat us and keep us in ignorance? Would they not rather, considering the price of every thing wanting for our families, at least double our pay? Why is every regiment harassed with long marches from one end of the country to the other, but to keep them strangers to the people and to each other? Are we so well clothed as soldiers used to be? Ask the old pensioners of Chelsea college, whether horse or foot? Ask them too, if it was usual, when there were fewer regiments, for colonels to make a profit out of soldiers clothes? Don't colonels now draw half their income from what we ought to have, but of which we are robbed? These, comrades, are a few of our grievances, and but a few. What shall we do? The tyranny of what is falsely called discipline prevents us from acting like other men. We cannot join in a petition for that which common honesty would freely have given us long ago. We have only two choices; either to submit to the present impositions, or demand the treatment proper for men. The power is all our own. The regiments which send you this are willing to do their part: They will show their countrymen they can be soldiers without being slaves, and will make their demands as soon as they know you will not draw the trigger against them. Of this we will judge, when we know you have distributed this bill not only among your comrades, but to every soldier whom you know in every part of the country. Be sober, be ready.

App. (No. 6.)—Copy of letter taken amongst John Bone's papers. [Direction obliterated.]

Citizen;—I received your parcel with the regulations, &c. and am obliged to you for sending the Ulster address, as I think it will be productive to our cause, for they seem to meet the approbation of the citns. here, particularly the Irish soldiers in this town. I have disposed of them all, and shall be glad of 100 more, with 50 Buonaparté's address, and 50 duke of Richmond's letter, with some tickets, and charge the publication to me, and I will see you paid or return them, but I will do my endeavours to sell them. Citn., I mentioned in my last week's report for you to charge regulations, tickets, and magns. to the Maidstone Society, but you have put them in Wratten's bill, which I requested you to send to get the money for; likewise the society's bill, which I hope will be able to do next week. Citn., with respect to Paine's Agrarian Justice, it met the approbation of those I have conversed with about it, and think it does win them to our cause. You may send 50 of them if you please, and I will dispose of them if I can, or send them back. With respect to the 7 dozen of magn., I forgot to mention in the last week's, but it is a mistake in Beck's letter, for we do not want any, for they do not go off here, that is the reason we send 7 dozen back.

Report of the divisions:—Divn. 39.—20 present: No new members. Divn. 38.—40 present: Do. The referd. motion in the report, negative.

P. S. Direct in future to H. Fellows, at Mr. Bennet's, Stone-st., and not as before, for they will not come to hand if you do. Nothing particular since our last. With respect to other divns., we have not been able to furnish them with tiests, &c. but you shall hear when we do. Health and fraternity.

Maidstone, Monday night. H. Fellows.

App. (No. 7).—Copy of Papers found upon Richard Fuller, for the Seduction of the Soldiery.

No. 1.—Soldiers of Great Britain.

Brothers, and Fellow Citizens;—We the people of Great Britain, your friends, your countrymen, and your fellow-creatures, desire you for one minute to lay aside the bayonet and the musquet, and to behave like men. Sheathe the sword of murder! Cease to be assassins of your kind! Embrace us as your brethren! And let the tranquillity of

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reason succeed the hurricane of war! We require you to consider us as your friends, and then you will listen with attention. Our country is bleeding at every pore! Already scourged by the furies of ambition, she faints with the anguish, and shrinks with horror, lest the uplifted lash of tyranny should fall into a wound already lacerated to the bone. Our provisions have been transported to foreign countries, and our husbandmen have been seduced from the plough, to be beaten by their officers, and starve beneath a knapsack. Where the cottage once welcomed the free peasant to his evening's rest, the barrack now imprisons the hungry victim of military law. Our bravest heroes languish beneath the scourge, are tortured by the iron which pierces the tender foot, and shot like dogs to satiate the cruelty of their masters. The freedom of nature is drilled into slavery by torture and oppression, and the military tyrants of the day erect their infamous court martials upon the life and felicity of man. Come then; you as well as the people have your sufferings, and we are all brothers in distress! Why should we increase our miseries by becoming foes? We are all men! We all have feeling! We all have a country! Alas! why should those be hostile to each other, whose nature, country, and misfortunes, are the same. Nature and necessity call upon us to enlist under the same banner of liberty, and to inrol ourselves as comrades in the grand contest for reform. It is the practice of tyrants to separate you from your brothers and your country, to lock you up in barracks from our conversation, and to point your bayonets at our bosoms as though we were your foes. Let this auspicious age be the last in which military laws shall sever man from man, and make the soldier the murderer rather than the protector of his country. Let us shake hands, and the union will be the origin of liberty, and liberty will give the soldier a home, where a friend and a family shall succeed to a barrack and a tyrant. You have sixpence per day for clothes, food, and expenses; and out of this you are to find all things necessary for the existence of man; you have nothing of your own; even the common heritage of nature, personal liberty, is not yours; you are tied up like dogs; the lash sharpened with cruel knots lays bare your very bones; the spike run through the sole of your foot, makes the suspended wretch writhe and howl with agony. These are the rewards of your loyalty! and these the blessings which attend the service of a K——!!! Let not the dignity of the man, or the honour of the soldier, be starved like a beast, or whipt like a slave; exercise your reason; put on the uniform of liberty; make use alone of the arms of justice, and let the soldier be united to the man! The years of freedom approach—the Halcyon epoch of liberty draws near—Philosophy erects the stand of happiness, and the nations of the earth unite beneath its shade. Nature is preparing a feast upon the ruins of tyranny and invites all the universe to partake of the banquet. Will you, soldiers, refuse her gifts, and turn ungrateful from the feast? Will you desert the colours beneath which your brethren unanimously unite, and mutiny against the dictates of your hearts? Is it your duty to obey your———,or yourself? Consult your own feelings, and do not violate the oath which truth imprints upon the heart—unite with the oppressed against the oppressor, and terminate the year of oppression. Whether you shoot your fellow creatures under the impulse of private resentment, or whether you obey the nod of a tyrant, and massacre us by thousands, the guilt is the same; you are convicted of murder! and nature herself accuses you at the bar of social justice. Be murderers no longer—follow no more the starving practices of military assassins—Let soldiers protect the rights of citizens, and citizens will avenge the wrongs of soldiers! In short if you wish to fag and labour your lives away without comfort, to linger in a half-starved existence, the slaves of cruelty and engines of murder and oppression—If you wish, when old age has stolen away your strength, to have your tottering limbs want a bed to repose on, and to be whipt from parish to parish as a vagrant, then kiss the hand that scourges you, and be the means of enslaving the country that has nursed you in its bosom; but if you wish to enjoy the blessings of life and liberty, to have a competency prepared for your age in return for the labours of your youth—if you have the least regard for mankind or yourselves, make your musquets the means of peace, and your swords the just defence of your country's liberty.

No. 2. Whereas, It is notorious, that certain wicked and malicious persons, not having the fear of God before their eyes, but being moved and instigated by the devil, have from time immemorial infested, and do still infest, the greatest part of the world, to the utter subversion of the Rights of Man, and the total overthrow of civil and religious liberty, and instead of those glorious blessings, introducing, wherever they have prevailed, an infernal system of terror, slavery, and oppression, with all their attendant evils of poverty and famine, of fraud, robbery, murder, and suicide, likewise hastening and augmenting every other misery incident to human nature. To put in force the above system, and give the fullest effect to the evils inseparable from it, they have frequent recourse to enormous taxation, armies of ignorant and unprincipled savages, bribery and corruption, places and pensions, axes and gibbets, bastiles and banishment, spies and informers, with a cruel and rigorous suppression of every attempt to diffuse instruction, and cherish the dawnings of reason; to enlighten the people, and rouse them to a sense of their importance and their rights; likewise with additional cruelty em-

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ploying a band of mercenary priests (called national clergy) to rivet the fetters of ignorance, by inculcating among other superstitions the doctrine of non-resistance and passive obedience, and pronouncing eternal damnation on disobedience to the sanguinary mandates of tyrants. And whereas it is notorious that this banditti arrogate to themselves titles which the light of nature and that divine philanthropist, the illustrious founder of the christian religion, declare can only be applied without blasphemy to the deity himself, who alone is the most high and mighty prince, most puissant prince, dread sovereign, most sacred, most excellent, and most gracious majesty. Likewise adding folly and absurdity to their daring impiety, they are passionately fond of being called by a variety of nicknames, and are often mad to distraction for childish playthings, which they imagine give dignity to their odious persons, and excite wonder and awe in the minds of the ignorant. Another trait of their character is their unbearable insolence to their supposed inferiors, demanding honours which in reality belong to no created being (much less to the vilest monsters ever created) and requiring the most abject submission to their tyrannical pleasure. Likewise continually insulting the people with a profession of scornful and humiliating epithets, such as subjects, slaves, mobs, swinish multitude, vulgar rabble, base wretches, raggamuffins, sans culottes, acquitted felons, &c. &c. Likewise wasting many precious lives, and much property of the people, to import luxuries from every clime for the gratification of their depraved appetites, while the above "swinish multitude" are cruelly denied a little clean straw and a few wholesome acorns. Again, the disposition of these incarnate fiends is manifest in a horrid thirst for blood and delight in slaughter. Peace and tranquillity they view with stedfast hate, and banish from their courts with oaths of eternal separation. The sights which afford them the greatest pleasure and satisfaction are the dreadful glare of murderous steel, blazing towns, and fields covered with slain, rivers of smoking crimson, and the once smiling garden of plenty exhibiting scenes of desolation and famine. Their greedy ear drinks in like harmonious music the hostile roaring of the brazen trumpet, the impatient clashing of the instruments of death, the groans of the dying, the shrieks of widows, and the cries of orphans. Hence it ceases to astonish us when we hear of plundering terrestrial paradises, of exterminating their millions of inoffensive inhabitants, and re-peopling with other millions torn from their native shores. Hence we hear of the murder of thirty thousand men in cold blood; at another time, twenty seven thousand five hundred men, and three thousand women and children, of a brave and virtuous people, falling beneath the sword of a sacred and sainted empress. And hence we have heard from a tyrant more sanguinary still, of starving twenty five millions struggling for liberty.—Prodigious, nameless wickedness!!! These are your gods! Ye advocates for k——s.

Fellow Citizens;—Do not your bosoms swell with indignation; are you not resolved to crush these serpents, and rid yourselves and mankind for ever of the worst of plagues? Let them exhibit the glittering magic of their usurped authority; let them threaten to crush us with their frown; let them plead their divine hereditary right, and issue their pompous proclamations. Alas how vain! how weak and imbecile, when opposed to a nation brave and unanimous, that wills to be free. Fellow Citizens! Brethren! We hail you with vows of health and fraternity Unite! Persevere! and be Free!

App. (No. 8). Address from United Britons to United Irishmen.

Fellow Men; Anxious to dissipate those prejudices which a mistaken and interested policy of opinion, from being held by the people of England and Ireland, we in the name of the former, with whose sentiments we are acquainted, and whose confidence we possess, declare that we will, by every possible means, promote the emancipation of both countries. To forward this great object we offer you our confidence, and in return demand yours Though labouring under the yoke of the same oppression, the sister countries have been differently treated. Ireland has always been the object of direct and open violence, England of fraud; Ireland has been robbed, England has been cheated. By one uniform plan division has been carried on in both. Sacrificed as Ireland has been to the ambition of England, the idea of her being treated as a free country was too gross to be obtruded upon the meanest understanding, But England, whose avarice was flattered by the despicable lure of exclusive trade, greedily swallowed the bait. She was taught to believe that riches flowed upon her, while poverty was secretly insinuating itself into her vitals. Amidst mock contentions for liberty, and real ones for plunder, she vainly imagined herself free, and was thereby induced to pay the interest of a debt of greater amount than the value of the whole landed property of the country, without reflecting that bankruptcy, however late, must be the consequence of an over-stretched credit. That bankruptcy has arrived. The religious dissensions between Catholic and Protestant in Ireland, whose opinions admit of a real distinction, and the party squabbles between whig and tory in England whose political ones admit of none, were assiduously fomented. The people differed about a shadow till they lost the substance. The plan of oppression was systematically directed throughout both countries to the same object, though in apparent opposi-

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tion. In Ireland revenue was only raised to be lavished in unmerited pensions, without the insult of pretended national advantage. In England the veil of fraud was necessary to cheat the people of large sums under the plausible pretext of public necessity. The undisguised oppressions of Ireland, by rendering subsistence precarious to the poor, have made her a constant hot-bed for the subtleties of tyranny; but in England occasional crops could only be raised, when the flame of war unusually force the soil. This marked distinction in the treatment of the countries, has produced as marked a difference in the characters of the two nations. Ireland has acquired that of manly openness, England that of mean disguise. England, though abused with forms, has never been without sincere friends to substantial liberty. Among them a number of dark and designing characters have always intended, and their conduct has furnished such a tissue of apostacy, that general apathy had nearly succeeded general distrust. Various political societies have been instituted for the purpose of reform, but of those, few could boast purity of principles or integrity of leaders. Formerly Richmond headed the votaries of universal suffrage, Fox those of representation by householders, and Pitt those who wished to disfranchise the corrupt boroughs to throw their proportion of representation into the counties: but these have vanished. The society of the Friends of the People, and for constitutional knowledge, have discontinued their exertions. The London Corresponding and other societies in union with it have arisen upon their ruins; and as universal good is the basis, we doubt not, but supported by numbers and principles, they will not be wanting in the hour of danger. The Irish, always an heroic people, have, during the American war, become an armed nation. They took up arms for defence, and undertook the cause of reform for security. England likewise engaged in the cause of reform, but her efforts were weak, as she had not endured sufficient to convince her of the necessity of union. The efforts of a number of eminent persons in both countries, in the cause of freedom, were insufficient, because prejudice yet prevailed, and more were not yet awakened to their just rights and true interests. The apostacy of several leaders in the public cause, added to the famous coalition, smothered for a long time the flame of liberty, till the French revolution again fanned its dying embers into a glow, which we hope and trust will never be extinguished.—The conduct of the two countries on this important event displayed a striking contrast. Ireland, who by her arms had extorted from the English government some fragments of her rights, seemed ready in the same manner to demand the rest. England also formed societies whose object was emancipation; but alas! they over-rated its force.—The bills in Ireland, the treason and sedition bills in England, and their consequences in both countries, need hardly be mentioned. On the people they brought chains, on the government irreconcilable hatred. One good effect has however resulted from mutual sufferings and mutual commiseration; the prejudice of nations is done away, and the English burn with desire to hail the Irish as freemen and as brethren.—Our numbers are immense, our influence still more considerable, and our sentiments accord with yours; we are unthinned by the tyranny of the law or the sword; 'tis true we have had our fears and our jealousies; spies and informers have been introduced amongst us; but all those have served only to point out more clearly the men who are worthy of trust; and in these, whether rich or poor, we have the highest confidence.—Our delegate is entrusted to lay before you our whole proceedings; we therefore decline entering into particulars in the present address. We have reposed confidence in you, and shall expect such a return as you may think our integrity and talents deserve. We doubt not but you will, with us, see the propriety of establishing unlimited confidence, or declining our interference as fruitless. Should you think our situation, our influence, and our opportunities, calculated to serve the common cause, rely upon our diligence, zeal, and our fidelity. With best wishes for the amelioration of the condition of man, and hopes that your exertions and virtues, aided by a united people, will speedily emancipate your country, we remain, in the bonds of brotherhood and union, yours fraternally.

(Seal). Friday, January 5th, 1798.

App. (No. 9).—Address of the London Corresponding Society to the Irish Nation.

"What are fifty, nay a thousand slaves
To the nerve of a single arm
That strikes for liberty?"

Brave and suffering Nation;—The London Corresponding Society, animated by the desire of promoting universal liberty, and alive to the general interests of humanity, have beheld with inexpressible regret the enormous cruelties which have with impunity been practised in every corner of your devoted country. Jealous of the honour of the community of which we are members, and feeling for the dignity of the British character, we deem it our duty to address and assure you, whatever atrocities may have been committed by misguided men, or however the sentiments of the people of this country may have been represented by interested ones, there are few in Britain who do not shudder with horror at a recital of the sufferings of the Irish people.—Did we read that in any foreign country, or at any remote period of antiquity, the governors of a populous and civilized kingdom had laid waste with fire and sword large tracts of land, had murdered the innocent traveller on the road, had turned women in the agonies of childbirth naked into the fields at midnight,

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there to behold with additional pangs their little all consumed by the flames which persecution had kindled, and their dearest relatives murdered by sanguinary malice, whilst others were tortured at the will of a licensed banditti; did we read of all those cruelties, and that they were exercised not upon rebels, but under the pretext of preventing rebellion, we should shut the book with horror, and execrate the guilty perpetrators as monsters for whose atrocities language had not a name. Yet much do we fear, that when the historian of Ireland shall pen the history of the present times, he will, in obedience to truth, be necessitated to stain its pages with crimes equal to any we have conjectured. Has not popular privilege upon all occasions been obliged to bow the obedient head and bend the suppliant knee, to the imperious behests of prerogative? Has not every barrier between privilege and prerogative been overthrown by power, or overwhelmed by corruption? Have not thy laws been perverted? thy penal statutes extended to acts to which justice cannot attach criminality? Have not juries been packed, threatened, and intoxicated? Have not judges received, and caused to be executed, verdicts where malice and prejudice have been proved? Have not witnesses been permitted to give evidence, whose perjuries were open and manifest? In fine, has not justice, and the forms of justice, nay even decency, been disregarded? And why has all this inhumanity, this savage barbarity, been committed. "Because," say your governors, "some men formed societies, calling themselves United Irishmen, who swore in the most solemn manner to persevere in endeavouring to form a brotherhood of affection among Irishmen of every religious persuasion, for the purpose of effecting reforms which we do not think expedient."—These are the crimes of which you are accused, and to support these accusations, fire, torture, and death, are to ravage the once peaceful plains of Ireland. If to wish for that happy union of mankind, when their religious opinions shall be no obstacle to the performance of their moral duties, be criminal, we also are guilty; and if to unite in the cause of reform upon the broadest basis be treason, we with you are traitors. We cannot (thanks to our more enlightened English juries) pursue the analogy farther. For though hireling spies and informers have attempted the lives of some of our members, their efforts were rendered ineffectual by the virtuous integrity of those to whom their country had entrusted their condemnation or acquittal.—Your injuries have made a deep impression upon our minds, from a consideration that as our fellow men in Ireland live under the same form of government, and are in fact governed by the same men, we entertain the well-grounded fear that what has been done in Ireland may be done in Britain. This we are confirmed in when we compare the systematic exactness between the measures formerly pursued in Ireland, and those now pursuing in Great Britain. Among you, religious dissensions have been fomented, among us, the seeds of distrust have been scattered. But as is commonly the fate of bad men, their measures have recoiled upon themselves: they have strengthened the bond of union among you, till "neither hopes, fears, rewards, or punishments, shall ever induce" you to forego it, and they have enabled us so clearly to discern the genuine friends of liberty, that no finesse, no glitter of counterfeit patriotism, can dazzle our eyes or mislead our judgment.—Penal statutes have been multiplied against us as well as against you, and those rights hitherto held most sacred have been attacked; yet have we not ceased from our exertions; we have persevered, and we will persevere, though military law be proclaimed, and trial by jury suspended. 'Tis true, we cannot boast of our sufferings with equal propriety; but if circumstances shall place us in a like situation, we trust we shall not be found inferior in virtue to the people of Ireland. You have borne individual wrong with unparalleled patience and forbearance; with a view to promote collective happiness, you have convinced the world that you possess passive courage to a great extent; and should the omnipotent voice of necessity call upon you to exert it actively, doubt not but you will evince that you possess it in as eminent a degree.—We embrace the present opportunity of appealing to our armed countrymen in Ireland. 'Soldiers,' we have with the deepest concern learned, that you have, on some occasions, been induced to violate that humanity which has heretofore characterized British soldiers. We conjure you, by the love you bear your country, and by the affection you feel for your relatives, and by every thing that is dear to man, to forbear committing any outrage, however you may be promised protection therein; we entreat you, if you value the national honour of Great Britain, or the reputation of her arms, to disgrace not the one or sully the other by acts of cruelty or brutality. Remember, Britons, that were it possible for you to descend so vilely low as to become the agents of enslaving Ireland, and were it possible for you to succeed therein, her inhabitants may be made the instruments of subjugating the liberties of your country, If you massacre the Irish, will not the Irish in some measure be justified in retaliating upon the British. If good offices demand congenial returns, does not offensive cruelty palliate defensive barbarity. But why should we predict calamities which we hope will never happen; you will, we trust, behave with the manly firmness of British soldiers, not the desperate fury of freebooters and assassins; such conduct will endear you to your relatives and friends, by convincing them that their happiness is dear to you; it will restore peace and liberty to Ireland, and consequently to Great Britain.

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Generous, gallant Nation!—May the present address convince you how truly we sympathise in all your sufferings, and how much we should be gratified at being able to alleviate them.—May nations be instructed by your example, to mark the wily schemes by which governors induce a people to barter away their liberty, under an idea of preserving present quiet: May they learn that "existing circumstances" have been the watchword of despotism in all ages and in all countries; and that when a people once permits government to violate the genuine principles of liberty, encroachment will be engrafted upon encroachment; evil will grow upon evil; violation will follow violation; and power will engender power, till the liberties of all will be held at the despotic command of a tyrant or tyrants, who will soon throw away even the mask of law, and undisguisedly violate what they for a while politically seemed to respect and venerate.—May your governors be warned by historic experience, and learn that governments are made for the people, and not the people for governments; that the voice of God is always to be gathered from the congregated will of his rational creatures; that the just revenge of a people is ever proportionated to the injuries which they have received: that the irritated feelings of the injured cannot always be repressed; that forbearance beyond a certain point becomes cowardice; that a courageous people may be driven to despair; and finally, that a unanimous, a united nation never can rebel.—In thy behalf, oh Ireland! do we supplicate the great Author of nature! May he look with compassion upon thy miseries! May he wipe away the falling tear from the cheek of affliction! May he be a "father to the fatherless, and a friend to him who has none to help him!" May he strengthen the feeble, invigorate the weak, encourage the timid, unite the disunited, energize the virtuous, enervate the vicious, paralyze the efforts of the wicked, and crown with success the struggles of the brave and valiant; ultimately we beseech him to inspire you with that undaunted courage and perseverance which is essential to the attainment and security of rational freedom; that freedom without which life is only a miserable existence, and death a happy release from bondage.—Signed in name, and by order of the London Corresponding Society.

R. T. Crossfield, President.
Committee Room, T. Evans, Secretary.
London, 30th Jan. 1798.

App. (No. 10).—Address of the Secret Committee of England to the Executive Directory of France.—Health and Fraternity.

Citizen Directors;—We are called together on the wing of the moment to communicate to you our sentiments. The citizen who now presents them to you, and who was the bearer of them before, having but a few hours to remain in town, expect not a laboured address from us; but plainness is the great characteristic of republicans.—Affairs are now drawing to a great and awful crisis; tyranny shaken to its basis, seems about to be buried in its own ruins. With the tyranny of England, that of all Europe must fall. Haste then, great nation! pour forth thy gigantic force! Let the base despot feel thine avenging stroke, and let one oppressed nation carol forth the praises of France at the altar of liberty.—We saw with rapture your proclamations, they met our warmest wishes, and removed doubts from the minds of millions. Go on! Englishmen will be ready to second your efforts.—The system of borrowing, which has hitherto enabled our tyrants to disturb the peace of a whole world, is at an end; they have tried to raise a kind of forced loan—it has failed! Every tax diminishes that revenue it was intended to augment, and the voluntary contributions produce almost nothing. The aristocracy pay their taxes under that mask; the poor workmen in large manufactories have been forced to contribute under the threat of being turned out of employ; even the army have been called upon to give a portion of their pay to carry on the war,—by far the greatest part have peremptorily refused to contribute to so base a purpose, and the few that have complied, have in general been cajoled, or reluctantly compelled to it.—Englishmen are no longer blind to their most sacred claims; no longer are they the dupes of an imaginary consitution; every day they see themselves bereft of some part of the poor fragment of democracy they have hitherto enjoyed, and they find that in order to possess a constitution they must make one.—Parliamentary declaimers have been the bane of our freedom. National plunder was the object of every faction, and it was the interest of each to keep the people in the dark; but the delusion is past! the government has pulled off its disguise, and the very men, who under the semblance of moderate reform, only wished to climb into power, are now glad to fall into the ranks of the people. Yes, they have fallen into the ranks, and there they must for ever remain, for Englishmen can never place confidence in them.—Already have the English fraternized with the Irish and Scots, and a delegate from each now sits with us. The sacred flame of liberty is rekindled, the holy obligation of brotherhood is received with enthusiasm; even in the fleets and the armies it makes some progress.—Disaffection prevails in both, and united Britain burns to break her chains.—Fortunately we have no leader; avarice and cowardice have pervaded the rich, but we are not therefore the less united. Some few of the opulent have indeed, by speeches, professed themselves the friends of democracy, but they have not acted; they have considered themselves as distinct from the people, and the people will, in its turn,

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consider their claims to its favour as unjust and frivolous. They wish, perhaps, to place us in the front of the battle, that, unsupported by the wealth they enjoy, we may perish, when they may hope to rise upon our ruin. But let them be told, though we may fall through their criminal neglect, they can never hope to rule, and that Englishmen, once free, will not submit to a few political impostures. United as we are, we now only wait with impatience to see the hero of Italy, and the brave veterans of the great nation. Myriads will hail their arrival with shouts of joy; they will soon finish the glorious campaign; tyranny will vanish from the face of the earth, and, crowned with laurel, the invincible army of France will return to its native country, there long to enjoy the well-earned praise of a grateful world, whose freedom they have purchased with their blood.

6th Pluviose, (L. S.)
A. R. P. G. 6.

App. (No. 11.)—Copy of a Form of Oath found in Thomas Evans's pocket, proposed for the United Englishmen.

I —— do truly and sincerely engage to defend my country, should necessity require; for which purpose am willing to join the society of True Britons, to learn the use of arms, in order that equal rights and laws should be established and defended.

App. (No. 12.)—Copy of a Form of Oath found on the floor of the George, St. John-street, Clerkenwell.

In the awful presence of God, I *A. B.* do voluntarily declare, that I will persevere in endeavouring to form a brotherhood of affection among Englishmen of every religious persuasion; and that I will also persevere in my endeavours to obtain an equal, full, and adequate representation of all the people of England.

I do further declare, that neither hopes, fears, rewards, or punishments, shall ever induce me directly or indirectly, to inform or give evidence against any member or members of this or similar societies, for any act or expression of theirs done or made collectively or individually, in or out of this society, in pursuance of the spirit of this obligation.

So help me God.

App. (No. 13.)—The Declarations, Resolutions, and Constitution of the Societies of United Englishmen.

Declaration and Resolutions.—In the present æra of reform, when unjust governments are falling in every quarter of Europe; when religious persecution is compelled to adjure her tyranny over conscience; when the rights of men are ascertained in theory, and that theory substantiated by practice; when antiquity can no longer defend absurd and oppressive forms against the common sense and common interest of mankind; when all governments are acknowledged to originate from the people, and to be so far only obligatory, as they protect their rights and promote their welfare:—We think it our duty, as Englishmen, to come forward, and state what we feel to be our heavy grievance, and what we know to be its effectual remedy.

We have no national government. We are ruled by individuals, whose instrument is corruption, and whose strength is the weakness of the people; and these men have the whole of the power and patronage of the country as means to seduce and subdue the honesty of her representatives in the legislature. Such an extrinsic power, acting with uniform force, in a direction too frequently opposite to the true line of our obvious interests, can be resisted with effect solely by unanimity, decision, and spirit in the people.—Qualities which may be exerted most legally, constitutionally, and efficaciously, by that great measure, essential to the prosperity, and freedom of England,—an equal representation of all the people in parliament.

We do not here mention as grievances the corruption publicly practised in both Houses of Parliament; nor the notorious infamy of borough traffic in both; not that we are insensible of their enormity, but that we consider them as but symptoms of that mortal disease which corrodes the vitals of our constitution, and leaves to the people, in their own government, but the shadow of a name.

Impressed with these sentiments, we have agreed to form an association, to be called The Society of United Englishmen: and we do pledge ourselves to our country, and mutually to each other, that we will steadily support, and endeavour, by all due means, to carry into effect the following Resolutions: 1. That the weight of corrupt influence in the government of this country is so great, as to require a cordial union among all the people of England, to maintain that balance which is essential to the preservation of our liberties. 2. That the sole constitutional mode, by which this influence can be opposed, is by a complete and radical reform of the representation of the people in parliament. 3. That no reform is practicable, efficacious, or just, which shall not include Englishmen of every religious persuasion.

Satisfied, as we are, that the intestine divisions among Englishmen, have too often given encouragement and impunity to profligate, audacious, and corrupt administrations, in measures, which, but for these divisions, they durst not have attempted—we submit our resolutions to the nation, as the basis of our political faith.—We have gone to what we conceive to be the root of the evil—we have stated what we conceive to be the remedy.—With a parliament thus reformed, every thing is easy—without it nothing can be done;—and we do call on, and most earnestly exhort our countrymen in ge-

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neral, to follow our example, and to form similar societies in every quarter of the kingdom, for the promotion of constitutional knowledge, the abolition of bigotry in religion and politics, and the equal distribution of the rights of man throughout all sects and denominations of Englishmen. The people, when thus collected, will feel their own weight, and secure that power which theory has already admitted as their portion, and to which, if they be not aroused by their present provocations to vindicate it, they deserve to forfeit their pretensions for ever.

The Society of United Englishmen, ardently desiring that the unawed, unhired, and honest part of the community, should become one great society of United Englishmen, are of opinion, that a general code of regulations is absolutely necessary co accomplish that important end. For this purpose, they have, after mature deliberation, adopted the following constitution and test, the adoption of which is necessary for such societies as wish to enter into communication and correspondence with those already established. It is earnestly recommended to societies, to establish a baronial committee in a central part of each barony, or such other district as may be thought proper, for the purpose of corresponding with each other, by deputation or otherwise. The societies of each barony to be numbered according to seniority, and the number of members to be returned to the secretary of the baronial committee quarterly. New societies should be established by a deputation from an old one, who are to see a secretary appointed, and attested according to the secretaries test. The blanks in the constitutional code are to be filled up agreeably to the opinion and convenience of each society.

Constitution.—1. This society is constituted for the purpose of forwarding a brotherhood of affection, a communion of rights, and a union of power among Englishmen of every religious persuasion; and thereby to obtain a complete reform in the legislature, founded on the principles of civil, political, and religious liberty. 2nd. The members of this society shall either be ordinary or honorary, and shall not be limited to any description of men, but to extend to all persons who may be deemed eligible. 3rd. Every candidate for admission into this society shall be proposed by one member, and seconded by another, both of whom shall vouch for his character and principles, and whose names shall be entered in the books of the society. The candidate to be ballotted for on the society's subsequent meeting, and if one of the beans be black, he shall stand rejected. 4. As a fund is necessary, the better to carry into effect the purposes of this association, each member, on his admission, shall pay to the society the sum of and per month while he shall continue a member. 5. The officers of this society shall be a secretary and treasurer, who shall be appointed by ballot, every three months, viz. on every first meeting in November, February, May, and August. 6. This society, in manner aforesaid, shall appoint two members, who, with the secretary, shall act for the society in a baronial committee, which members shall receive on each night of their attendance on said committee. 7. This society shall, in manner aforesaid, appoint members, who, with the treasurer, shall form a committee of finance, &c. 8. At the request of either committees, or any members signing a requisition, the secretary, or if he shall be absent, the treasurer, shall call an extra meeting of the society. 9. This society shall meet in ordinary, every second evening, at o'clock, the president to be chosen by a majority of the members present, of whom shall be a quorum. 10. Every respect and deference shall be paid to the chairman. On his rising from his seat and taking off his hat, there shall be silence, and the members seated. He shall be the judge of order and propriety: shall grant leave of absence at pleasure: shall not enter into debate. If any member behave improperly, he is empowered to direct an apology, or, if refractory, fine him in any sum not exceeding and on refusal to do as directed, he shall therefore be expelled the society for 11. No member shall speak more than twice to one question, without leave from the chairman. 12. Every person elected a member of this society, whether ordinary or honorary, shall, previous to his admission, take the following test, in a separate apartment, in the presence of the persons who proposed and seconded him, and one member appointed by the chairman; or, in case of absence of one of the two persons, the chairman shall appoint another member to act for the absentee; after which the new member shall be brought into the body of the society, and there take the test in the usual form. Test—"In the awful presence of God, I, A. B. do voluntarily declare, that I will persevere in endeavouring to form a brotherhood of affection among Englishmen of every religious persuasion; and that I will also persevere in my endeavours to obtain an equal, full, and adequate representation of all the people of England. I do further declare, that neither hopes, fears, rewards, or punishments, shall ever induce me, directly or indirectly to inform or give evidence against any member or members of this or similar societies, for any act or expression of theirs, done or made collectively or individually, in or out of this society, in pursuance of the spirit of this obligation." 13. A member of any other acknowledged society being introduced to this society by a member, shall, upon producing a certificate signed by the secretary, and sealed with the seal of the society to which he may belong, and taking the foregoing test, be admitted to attend the sittings of this society.

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14. No member shall have a certificate but by applying to the committee, who shall not grant it, unless the member is leaving his place of residence, which certificate shall be lodged with the secretary on his return. 15. When this society shall amount to the number of thirty-six members, it shall be equally divided by lot; that is, the names of all the members shall be put into a hat or box; the secretary or treasurer shall draw out eighteen individually, which eighteen shall be considered the senior society, and the remaining eighteen the junior, who shall apply to the baronial committee, through the delegates of the senior society, for a number, and that this division shall take place only in the months of October, January, April, and July. The fund shall also be equally divided. 16. That no society shall be recognized by any committee, unless approving of, and taking the test, and amounting in number to seven members.

Order of Business at Meetings.—1st. New members read declaration and test, during which subscriptions to be collected. 2nd. New members take the test, all members standing and uncovered. 3rd. Minutes of preceding meeting read. 4th. Reports of committees received. 5th. Communications called for. 6th. Candidates ballotted for. 7th. Candidates proposed. 8th. Motions made and determined. 9th. Place and time of next meeting appointed.

Constitution of Committees, as adopted the 10th of May.

Baronial Committees.—1. When any barony or other district shall contain three or more societies, three persons from each shall be elected by ballot, conformable to the sixth article, to form a baronial committee (for three months); their names to be returned to the secretary of the senior society, who shall request a deputation from the nearest baronial committee to constitute a committee for the said barony or other district. 2. When any barony or district shall contain eight societies, they may form another committee, to be called the second committee of said barony or district, provided each contain three or more societies. 3. Baronial committees shall receive delegates from societies of a contiguous barony, provided said barony do not contain three societies. 4. That the baronial committee shall correspond with societies or individuals who have subscribed the declaration, and taken the test of the present associated societies. 5. That all questions shall be determined by a majority of the members present. 6. That the baronial committee being regularly summoned, the one-third of its members shall be deemed a quorum, and capable of proceeding to business. 7. That any business originating in any individual society, shall, at the instance of such society's delegates, be by the baronial committee laid before the other societies.

County Committees.—1. When any county shall contain three or more baronial committees, two persons shall be elected by ballot from each baronial committee to form a county committee (for three months.) 2. County committees shall receive delegates from baronial committees of adjacent counties, if said counties do not contain three baronial committees.

Provincial Committees.—1. When two or more counties shall have county committees, three persons shall be elected by ballot from each, to form a provincial committee (for three months.) 2. Delegates from county committees in other provinces will be received, if such province do not contain two county committees.

National Committee.—That when two provincial committees are formed, they shall elect five persons from each, by ballot, to form a national committee. Societies first meetings in November, February, May, and August, to be on or before the 5th. Baronial committees on or before the 8th. County committees on or before the 25th of the above months. Baronial, county, and provincial committees, shall meet at least once in every month, and report to their constituents. Names of committee men should not be known by any person but by those who elect them.

Test for Secretaries of Societies or Committees.

"In the awful presence of God, I, A.B. do voluntarily declare, that, as long as I shall hold the office of secretary to this I will, to the utmost of my power, faithfully discharge the duties thereof; that all papers or documents received by me, as secretary, I will in safety keep; I will not give any of them, or any copy or copies of them, to any person or persons, members or others, but by a vote of this , and that I will, at the expiration of my secretaryship, deliver up to this all such papers as may be then in my possession."

Certificate.—Society of the United Englishmen of

"I hereby certify, that A.B. has been duly elected, and, having taken the test provided in the constitution, has been admitted a member of this society. Sec."

App. (No. 14.)—Copy of Test to be used by the Soldiers.

I, A.B. do swear not to obey the colonel, but the people, not the officers, but the committee of United Englishmen, then sitting in England, Ireland, and Scotland, and to assist with arms, as far as lies in my power, to establish a republican form of government in this country, and others, and to assist the French on their landing to free this country.

So help me God.

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App. (No. 15.)—Resolutions and Constitution of the Society of United Scotsmen.

In the present age, when knowledge is making rapid strides among mankind, and neighbouring nations have been under the necessity of meliorating their condition, owing to the stubbornness and perfidy of the governments under which they lived, by despising and rejecting the reiterated and just calls of the people for reform; it becomes us, as friends to peace and good order, at the present awful crisis, when we are engaged in an unprecedented bloody and expensive war, to investigate with calmness and deliberation into the system of our own government, on purpose to discover its errors and defects; so that whatever abuses may exist, they may be rectified by a timely reform, and the like calamities which have befallen a neighbouring nation may be prevented.—Conscious of the rectitude of our association and intentions, and regardless of the threats of the venal and interested, we will inquire into our grievances with a determined and manly freedom, knowing that we have no other object in view, but the peace and happiness of our native country. Possessing such ideas, we cannot but exclaim with astonishment, What a multitude of ages have mankind been kept in complete ignorance with respect to their natural rights! Rights of which no association of men have a power to deprive them, whatever foolish titles they may assume. Was the human race created with reasoning faculties by the Supreme Being, for no other purpose than to be possessed and made tools by corrupt governments, for the destruction of their own species? No. It was for a more noble end.—We disdain the principles of corrupt courtiers and their satellites, who propagate such nefarious doctrine. Mankind are naturally friends to each other; and it is only the corruptions and abuses in governments that make them enemies.—We profess ourselves friends to mankind, of whatever nation or religion. National and party distinctions have been created and supported by tyrannic men, on purpose to maintain their unjust usurpations over the people. We will ask any unprejudiced person, if the people in Britain are fairly, fully, or equally represented? Have the people in general any control or concern in the election of magistrates in the different boroughs in Scotland? Are clergymen, in many parts of Scotland, forced on the people against their inclination? Are there any intricacies or inequalities in law procedure that could be rectified? We decline enumerating many other abuses, all of which could be removed by a timely and radical reform in the House of Commons. We abhor and detest all riots and tumults. Our armour shall be reason and truth, which we will not swerve from on any account. Our whole aim is to procure annual parliaments and universal suffrage. Till this is done, we declare to the world, that we will never desist till we procure this our national right, the want of which is probably the source of all our national grievances. Impressed with these sentiments, we have collectively and individually agreed to form an association, to be called The United Scotsmen; and we do pledge ourselves to our country, and mutually to each other, to carry into effect, by all just means, the following Resolution:—An equal representation of all the people in parliament.

Constitution.—1. This society is constituted for the purpose of forwarding a brotherhood of affection, a communion of rights, and a union of power, among Britons of every description,—for the purpose of obtaining a complete reform in the legislature, founded on the principles of civil, political, and religious liberty. 2. The members of this society shall not be confined to any description of men, but extended to all persons who may be deemed eligible. 3. Every candidate for admission into this society shall be proposed by one member, and seconded by another; both of whom shall vouch for his character and principles, and be ballotted for, before he can be admitted a member. 4. Each member shall pay not less than sixpence on entering the society; and not less than threepence per month during his continuance in the said society. 5. The one-half of the income to be paid into the hands of the secret committee, the other half to defray expenses of delegates attending their duty in different committees. 6. The officers of this society shall be, a secretary and treasurer, who shall be chosen by ballot, and continue in office two months. 7. No member shall speak more than twice to one question, without leave from the chairman, whom he shall address standing. 8. A president to be chosen by ballot each meeting, whose business it shall be to keep order, and not to enter into debate. 9. When any society amounts to sixteen members, they shall divide into two societies, the new society taking along with them a secretary properly constituted.

Parochial Committees.—1. When any parish or district shall contain three societies, two persons from each shall be appointed, by ballot, to form a parochial committee, one of whom shall go out each month, and another ballotted for. 2. When any parish or district shall contain ten societies, they shall divide into a second committee of said parish. 3. Parochial committees shall receive delegates from societies of a neighbouring parish, providing said parish does not contain three societies. 4. That all questions shall be determined by a majority of the members present. None to sit in the committee but delegates. 5. That any business originating in any society shall, at the instance of such society's delegates, be, by the parochial, laid before the other societies.

County Committees.—1. When any town or county contains three or more parochial com-

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mittees, they shall elect two persons from each to form a county committee. 2. When any county shall contain twelve parochials, it shall divide into a second committee of said county. 3. County committees shall receive delegates from parochials of adjacent counties, if said county does not contain three parochial committees.

Provincial Committees.—1. When any province contains three county committees, they shall elect two from each to form a provincial committee. 2. Provincial committees shall receive delegates from adjacent provinces, if said provinces do not contain three county committees.—3. Every provincial committee shall send not less than two delegates to the supreme national committee.

National Committees.—The national committee shall elect a secret committee of seven members, all residing in or near the place where the National holds its sittings; two of them to go out by rotation each national meeting, and two others elected in their place.

Ordinary Business at Meetings.—1. President elected. 2. Reports of delegates received. 3. Communications called for. 4. Candidates voted for. 5. Motions made and determined. 6. Time and place of next meeting appointed.

Plan of Discipline.—That there shall be a committee of three elected out of every society, consisting of the secretary and two of the members, chosen for the following purposes, namely, to receive such persons as have been approved by the society, and to admonish members who have behaved improperly.

Test for Members.—In the awful presence of God, I, A. B. do voluntarily declare, that I will persevere in endeavouring to form a brotherhood of affection amongst Britons of every description; and that I will also persevere in my endeavours to obtain an equal, full, and adequate representation of all the people in Great Britain: I do farther declare, that whatever misfortunes may befall any member or members of this or similar societies, in legally pursuing the objects of this union, I will esteem it my duty to support them lawfully, to the utmost of my ability. So help me God.

Test for Secretary.—In the awful presence of God, I, A. B. do voluntarily declare, that as long as I shall hold the office of secretary to this , I will, to the utmost of my abilities, faithfully discharge the duties thereof. That all papers or documents, received by me as secretary, I will in safety keep: I will not give any of them, or any copy or copies of them, to any person or persons, members or others, but by a vote of this , and that I will, at the expiration of my secretaryship, deliver up to this all such papers as may be then in my possession. So help me God.

Test of Secrecy.—In the awful presence of God, I, A. B. do declare, that neither hopes, fears, rewards, or punishments, shall ever induce me, directly or indirectly, to inform or give any evidence against any member or members of this or similar societies, for any act or expression of theirs, done or made collectively or individually, in or out of this society, in pursuance of the spirit of this obligation. So help me God.

King's Proclamation respecting Persons coming from Ireland.] March 18. Mr. Pitt presented the following Proclamation:

By the KING a PROCLAMATION.

"GEORGE *R.*

"Whereas we have reason to apprehend that divers persons, engaged in the treasonable conspiracy against us in our kingdom of Ireland, which lately manifested itself in open acts of rebellion and war against us in our said kingdom, have not abandoned their treasonable designs against us; and acting in concert with our foreign enemies, are preparing to assist our said enemies, in an invasion of our kingdoms, and for that purpose are endeavouring to incite and stir up rebellion and war against us in this kingdom: we have therefore thought it necessary, for the safety of our kingdoms, to prevent all persons engaged in such treasonable designs, from passing from our said kingdom of Ireland into this kingdom, and we do for that purpose, by and with the advice of our privy council, order, and do hereby strictly charge and command, that from and after the 20th day of March instant, no person whatsoever be permitted to pass from our said kingdom of Ireland into this kingdom, except such persons as shall be in our service, and actually so employed; and such persons as shall obtain a passport for that purpose from our lord lieutenant of our said kingdom of Ireland, his chief or under secretaries, the mayor or other chief magistrate of some city or town in Ireland, or one of our general officers commanding our forces within the several districts in our said kingdom: and by and with the advice aforesaid, we do further order, and hereby strictly charge and command, that no person whatsoever (except as aforesaid) coming from our said kingdom of Ireland, be permitted to land in this kingdom without our licence for that purpose first obtained; and that all such persons (except as aforesaid) who shall land, or attempt to land, in this kingdom without such license as aforesaid, shall be

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forthwith taken into custody, and detained in custody until our pleasure shall be further known: and we do further order and require, that all persons having such passports as aforesaid, shall produce the same to some officer of our customs, at the port or place to which such persons shall come, before such persons shall be permitted to land at such port or place: and we do hereby, by and with the advice aforesaid, strictly enjoin, require, and command, all and singular justices of the peace, mayors, sheriffs, bailiffs, constables, and all other our officers and subjects, to use their utmost endeavours for the due execution of these our commands.—Given at our court at St. James's the 15th day of March, 1799, in the 39th year of our reign.—God save the King."

King's Message relative to Persons brought in Custody from Ireland.] April 3. Mr. Secretary Dundas presented the following Message from his Majesty:

"GEORGE *R.*

"His Majesty thinks it proper to acquaint the House of Commons, that, in consequence of representations received from his lord lieutenant of Ireland; his Majesty has judged it important, for the peace and security of that kingdom, to give directions that several persons, who were in custody at Dublin and Belfast, on account of the active part they took in the rebellion, or for treasonable practices committed in promoting the same, should be immediately removed to some place of safe custody out of that kingdom; and his Majesty has therefore ordered that they should be brought over to this country, and should for the present be kept in custody in Fort George. G. *R.*"

Debate in the Lords on the Resolutions relative to a Union with Ireland.] March 19. The order of the day being read for the Lords to be summoned,

Lord *Grenville* rose for the purpose of calling their lordships attention to the very important resolutions, communicated to that House by the Commons relative to a Union with Ireland. In bringing forward this subject for the consideration of their lordships, he had the satisfaction of being convinced that the two main points upon which the question could be properly argued had been already established; namely, that whatever steps they should take on the present occasion, the exclusive rights of the Irish legislature should be duly respected; and secondly, that it is essential to the interests of the empire at large, and indeed, in the present state of things, to the existence of civilized society in Europe, that the connexion between the two kingdoms should be strengthened and improved. He was aware, that there were some who would argue vehemently against the adoption of the measure at any time, and under any circumstances. Without attending at that moment to objections in toto, he would consider whether or not the present was a time proper for bringing forward the discussion; and in this view he would simply ask, whether it was not wise and politic, by urging with as little delay as the nature of the case would admit of, a fair and temperate discussion of the general question to endeavour to do away the mistaken prejudices which have prevailed against the measure in Ireland? In making this observation, nothing was farther from his intention than to offend the Irish parliament, or irritate the feelings of that nation; neither did he think the present proceeding on the part of the British parliament could fairly have that effect. And here he must remark upon the way in which the question stood in the parliament of Ireland. The resolution of their Commons (for more it could not be called) certainly was not conclusive. The proceeding was taken in consequence of the measure being alluded to in a speech from the throne. What passed in their lower House of Parliament, so far from amounting to a law, was, in fact, a dead letter upon the Journals. In such case, should the British parliament be precluded from doing what wisdom and national policy dictated? The conduct of their ancestors, upon an occasion nearly similar, offered the best rule to them. Let them see what that conduct was upon the affair of the Union with Scotland. If the resolutions of the parliaments of either country had been at that time considered as a bar to farther proceedings, that salutary measure would never have been perfected. The question, therefore, was, whether, in the particular circumstances of both countries, there was a necessity for the adoption of a plan, whereby their strength and resources might be consolidated and improved? The necessity of a change in the system of the Irish government was allowed on all hands. The grand difference of opinion was, with respect to the remedy for the grievances complained of in that country;

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and on this head he would declare, that he never yet conversed with any well-informed man from Ireland, who did not say that the present state of things could not continue, consistently with the general safety of the empire. He would contend, that the much-talked-of settlement of 1782 was not, nor could it be from its nature conclusive. But because, in the peculiar circumstances of that day, it was thought prudent to make certain temporary arrangements were they not to be revised at a fitter opportunity? The country was at that time engaged in one of the most calamitous wars ever known in history. Discontent, to a very high degree, was prevalent in Ireland; the nation was called upon to arm itself, and it took that opportunity to claim those concessions which were then made by this country as a right. From these considerations, it might easily be implied, that the settlement was imperfect; and it was considered as such at the time. The parliament of England declared that farther measures were necessary. It was therefore, the duty of parliament to come forward and supply the defects of the former settlement.

In looking farther into the relative state of the two countries, he would examine into the nature of their connexion, and what was the bond which held together countries ruled by separate and independent legislatures—it was merely this, that one common sovereign reigned over them—a sovereign constituted equally by the laws of both countries. This identity of the royal power was now the only remaining bond of connexion. In a pure and absolute monarchy such a bond of connexion might possibly be sufficient; but in a mixed government and limited monarchy as was the British, and the other component parts of the government of the countries distinct and separate, such a bond of union must be obviously imperfect. Nor was it alone to the British empire that such an objection could be applied: the system of government of the United Provinces laboured under a defect not dissimilar. The connexion of the different parts of that confederacy was by no means strong enough, and the effects of it were felt in every war those countries were engaged in. The case of America offered another instance. Formerly, the connexion between the different provinces of that continent and the mother country was nearly the same as that between Great Britain and Ireland now. The British parliament undoubtedly possessed a power of binding the American colonies in cases of general and external policy; but for the internal concerns of the countries, each province possessed a separate legislature. When the colonies effected their separation from Great Britain, in some degree the old system was continued; but they found it so inefficient to all the purposes of good government, that two years had scarcely elapsed before it was set aside, and a new form of government substituted, in which the bond of union was made closer than the connexion which now subsisted between Great Britain and Ireland; and the executive and legislative were made the same in a great degree throughout the whole United States: yet, notwithstanding, every well-informed statesman would acknowledge, that the grand defect in the American constitution is, that the executive authority is not yet rendered sufficiently strong. However, other countries, besides America, had to complain of such defect. Had the Swiss provinces possessed an adequate bond of union, they would have been able successfully to oppose the designs of France. With respect to the supposed existing bond of connexion between Great Britain and Ireland he was not afraid to say that it was absolutely null. If the two parliaments were suffered to remain in their present state; if the countries hung together by no other bond of connexion than the present, the connexion was, he repeated, absolutely null. If, by the British constitution, the royal power could be exercised, free from the control of parliament, then, indeed, the regal identity might be a bond of connexion; but if the whole system of the regal power was not only under the control, but could not go on without the aid and assistance of parliament, and the parliaments of each kingdom were to remain distinct and separate, then he repeated, the bond of connexion was obviously null. But, if we scrutinize the leading branches of the royal powers, and see in what manner they are capable of being exercised under the present system, the insecurity of the connexion will be still more apparent. The first branch of the regal power, in order and in dignity, in the British constitution, was what regarded the ecclesiastical establishment: in this consideration, let the House look at the present situation of the Irish parliament, the measures proposed

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there, and then he would ask, if the king of England could be said to possess an efficient controlling power over the ecclesiastical establishments of Ireland? It was loudly asserted, that the only means of saving Ireland was granting Catholic emancipation, accompanied by parliamentary reform. Let the House look to the possible consequences of the adoption of such a measure, in the present state of things in Ireland. By the laws of England, the king was liable to forfeit his crown in the case of his being a Roman Catholic: let them look to the effect of a king of Great Britain, acting under the control of a Catholic parliament.—From the ecclesiastical power he would pass to that next in rank, the judicial. There might exist two distinct modes of administrating the civil power of nations, without much injurious consequence; but this would not hold good with respect to two different modes of administering the criminal laws. When these existed under separate controls, and liable hourly to different interpretations, the case was highly dangerous; the only remedy for this evil was one common and supreme resort to refer to, whose decisions should be final. In this part of the executive government there was obviously no shadow of connexion. It was true the judges in both countries were appointed by the same person, but in course of time these judges must interpret the laws differently; the inconvenience arising from this had already been severely felt in Ireland; for it would be one of the best means of drawing English capital to that country, to show the people here that their properties would be as secure in Ireland as in Great Britain.

The next branch of the royal authority regarded its fiscal power; that is, what related to the expenditure and administration of the public money. By the arrangement of 1782, in this particular, the unity of that part of the regal power of both kingdoms was completely annulled. This was an evil, however, that would be gradually extinguished by an incorporated union: and in this part of the present system Ireland was peculiarly liable to feel an inconvenience—he meant with respect to loans. It was to this country that Ireland, in cases of necessity, must look for a supply, and the difficulty of negotiating them here must be increased, by the idea that the Irish parliament was completely independent of this country. But, in the event of a union, a system of mutual aid and accommodation, in the line of finance, would speedily be established. From this consideration he next passed to a point which, at the present moment, was of more than ordinary importance; namely, the military power of the crown. He would, in the present instance, but dwell lightly on the naval power of the crown, as it the less concerned Ireland as a distinct kingdom; but see the constitution of the military force in the British system of government. The mutiny bill, by which the army was alone supported, was submitted to the discretion of parliament from year to year. The army of the crown in Ireland was in like manner at the mercy of the Irish parliament, and they had it in their power to refuse the supplies for its support. Many cases might be supposed, wherein this independent legislative power, on the part of Ireland, might tend almost to the destruction of the empire at large, and where this part of the identity of the regal power might be null and void. He would cite a particular instance: a very few years ago the parliament of this country thought proper, upon the recommendation of the crown, to augment the pay of the naval and military forces. The parliament of Ireland did the same with respect to the military establishment. What might the consequences be, if it pleased the Irish parliament to exercise their independence, in refusing the augmentation. This part of the subject embraced another very serious point, namely, the qualifications and tests required of persons admitted into the service: these were in some degree different in both countries, the possible consequences of such a distinction might be well conceived for on the cordial co-operation of the military forces of a country its existence depended. The admissibility of Catholics into the army, through the medium of the Irish regulations, was a possible evil of serious magnitude.

He had thus gone through the ecclesiastical, judicial, fiscal, and military branches of the regal power. There still remained some other important branches to be considered: the first of these was what related to the concerns of external policy, such as the power of peace and war, and foreign negotiation; and in these respects let it be considered what the possible consequences of the present system might be. His majesty by the advice of the parliament of one country, might be at

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war with a particular power with whom the Irish parliament might think it the interest of their country to be at peace, and engaged in treaties of commerce. Two instances occurred very lately in which the reality of this supposition might have been experienced—the Spanish and Russian armaments. On these occasions, if ministers had taken a different turn, the proposition might have been at issue: for Ireland might with one of those powers have strongly conceived it her interest to remain at peace: and that she would resume the power of acting differently thereupon from England was evident, inasmuch as the measures of government were then submitted to the Irish parliament, and debated; and what did that imply but the power of deciding upon the subject at discretion? Let this view of the question, and these possible consequences, be seriously considered! Let their lordships look to the consequences, if the zealous exertions and eloquence of certain orators had been successful in persuading the Irish parliament to be of their opinion, that the war was ruinous and unjust, that the British government were the aggressors, that it was on the one side a confederacy of despots fighting against the establishment of liberty. These points were enough to prove the insecurity of the bond of union in respect to the prerogative of peace and war; there still remained to be considered the executive power, as presiding over the internal policy of Ireland; and with respect to this, it would be a mere waste of time to attempt to prove, that under the present system there was the least bond of connexion when the internal concerns of Ireland were referred to. One point yet remained untouched —the power of the crown, in the choice of its confidential advisers and ministers, for the affairs of both countries. The question was one of peculiar delicacy, whether it regarded the advisers of the crown for the concerns of the general policy of the empire, or for the administration of the particular affairs of either country: the question of the respective control of either parliament was here to be considered; and considering this control as vesting equally in each for the guidance of the respective ministers of each country, the regal bond of union was here as inefficacious as in any of the other branches of the regal power: but it had fallen to his lot to hear his majesty's British ministers censured for what was deemed the malversation of the Irish government, and not only for that, but even for acts passed in the Irish parliament.

Having thus touched upon all the parts in which the bond of the union between the countries was asserted to consist, and in which detail he trusted he had clearly proved its nullity, he contended, that the countries were reduced to the alternative of either giving up the exercise of the independence of the parliament of the one country, or of all bond of connexion between both. There was a particular instance, which could be introduced best in this part of his argument, and respected the question of a regency, either as it embraced the case generally, or referred to the various modes by which the power of a regent may be exercised. The case actually occurred in 1789, and, the conduct of the Irish parliament thereupon best spoke for itself. No specific mode was laid down before that period for meeting such an exigency. The question was considered by both parliaments, and the mode in which the Irish parliament thought proper to supply the exigency was one very different from that adopted by the British: the person chosen to fill that high office was undoubtedly the same; but had it pleased Providence to call him to perform its duties, he was to have exercised his authority in a different way in the respective kingdoms, and held the office by a different tenure. The majority of both parliaments might think themselves right, but they certainly could not both be right. This was one of the many cases which evinced the necessity of an incorporated union, and this important exigency could not properly be remedied in any other way; for what signified the nomination of a regent of Ireland by an Irish act of parliament? The very proceeding implies, on their part, the power of appointing a regent. Their conduct was an abandonment of the principle upon which the connexion between the countries was always held to subsist, and superseded the authority of the British parliament, in whom the right vested, to supply such a defect in the regal authority. The same principle that applied to the case of regency also went to affect the king's title to the crown; as it was held an act of treason to deny the power of parliament to vary the succession to the crown. By what was called the Annexation act, the crowns of the two kingdoms were united. Let any well-informed man

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be asked, what constituted the union of the crown? and he will say, the act of Henry the 8th, known by the name of the Annexation act. Now, when the Irish parliament, by its late conduct, trampled so close upon that principle, he would leave the House to judge, whether or not it went to affect the principle upon which the title to the crown rests. In this view of the case, was not the parliament of England called upon to suggest a remedy for those complicated evils? The settlement of 1782 was avowedly not conclusive; it was imperfect, and it became the duty of parliament to endeavour to supply the deficiencies. The only bond of connexion subsisting between the countries was obviously insecure. It was a unanimously received opinion, that some remedy must be applied; and he was confident there existed only one effectual mode—an incorporated legislative union.

The connexion between the countries arose from conquest, on the part of this country; but that conquest was achieved gradually. One of the most deeply-rooted causes of the present unhappy state of Ireland was, the religious dissentions prevailing therein. To elucidate this point, his lordship entered into a detailed history of the reformation, as it affected those islands; shortly after its first commencement until the distinction arose of Catholic and Protestant. When Protestantism became the religion of the governing powers in England, it necessarily became that of the governing powers in Ireland, but not of the great bulk of the people. These religious distinctions were the cause of the present calamities of Ireland; and not only of the present calamities, but of the frequent cruel rebellions and civil wars, which desolated the island from the reign of Elizabeth until the Revolution. A colony of English sectaries was transplanted by Cromwell into the north of Ireland, who had sucked in with their very milk a hatred against Popery—this became a case of increased national animosity on the score of religion. The first English monarch who set himself earnestly to introduce a system of peaceable policy, and some degree of agriculture and commerce into Ireland was James 1st; it was followed by his son during the administration of the great earl of Strafford; but the subsequent rebellion, which owed its cause to religious animosities, undid most of those advantages, which were not much restored by the wavering counsels of Charles 2nd. The case of the unfortunate James showed the dangerous power of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, and what their views were, with respect to the crown and constitution of England. However, it was not until the reign of our present gracious sovereign that a truly liberal policy was adopted with respect to those people. Every thing that was required on the score of religion was accorded them, and it was evident what little good effect it produced from the present system of government in Ireland. In 1778, the people of that country generally wished for what they called a free trade; that was granted to them in 1780. Great expectations were formed from that measure which have not been realized. The prosperity of Ireland could not be established by such means. It was by an influx of capital into the country—by introducing habits of industry, good order, and morality, among the lower classes of the people, that it could be achieved, and there was little hope of those being carried into effect under the present system. In 1782, his majesty, with that paternal care for the interests of all his subjects which so peculiarly characterizes him, called upon the Irish nation to state the causes of their discontent. They did so: and with a liberal policy, the settlement of 1782 was granted to them according to their desires. The events since have proved that they were completely deceived; what they required was granted to them, but all the evils remain still. A few years after, a new light broke in upon the people of Ireland. "Catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform" was the cry; and this was raised even by the lower orders of the people. However, no opinion could be more erroneous than that this last class of the people seriously wished for either, as independent of the confessions of avowed and convicted traitors, it appeared that the lower classes of the people neither cared for Catholic emancipation nor parliamentary reform. Not one in ten ever heard of the words: among those who did, ninety nine out of a hundred were ignorant of what they meant. But these expressions served as a watch word, and the exertions made to corrupt these unhappy persons, served to disseminate widely the poison of French principles. But it was by the restoration of good morals and the reign of industry that those persons could alone be made useful members of society,

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and the kingdom at large benefited by a political system, which would draw off the attention of the people from matters of trifling and internal concern, to affairs of greater political importance; as were instanced by the good effects arising from the consolidating of several petty and impotent states and republics, on the continent of Europe, into large and extensive kingdoms. By the application of such a general rule of policy to Ireland, that country would be really benefited in the first instance, and every other practical good would soon follow. The progress of civilization was obstructed by the present system of the Irish government, which could in no effectual way be obviated but by a legislative union. By it the evil designs of the Catholics would be frustrated, and their attention turned to other channels. The Protestants, from wishing to preserve an ascendancy in the limits of their own island, would look to aggrandisement and ascendancy through the medium of a united parliament. Such a measure would also have the salutary effect of establishing a scale of ranks and gradations of society in that country which was now much wanted: it was the only means by which capital could be drawn into that island, or effectual industry established there; and above all, of counteracting the perfidious designs of the enemy with respect to Ireland. By the measure of an incorporated union all those grievances could alone be healed, and religious distinctions be radically done away.—The competency of the parliament of either country had been questioned; but the practice of our ancestors, the records of history, and particularly the opinion of that excellent lawyer and statesman, Blackstone, obviated that idea. In the opinion of that lawyer parliament was competent to effect a change in the constitution itself, as it had done in the measure of the union with Scotland. The noble lord proceeded to argue the futility of this objection, from analogy. Had it been admitted, the British parliament could never have been constituted in its present form; for what was the parliament of England but an aggregate of petty states, which had from time to time merged into one? Had it not been enlarged by the union of Wales, and of the two county palatinates? If, then, it were argued that the parliament of Ireland was incompetent to agree to an incorporate union, it must follow, that every act of the English parliament, not only since the union with Scotland, but even since its first existence as a parliament, was an infringement upon public rights. This objection was founded in the principles of French Jacobinism; and with the admission of such principles, no government could exist: the admission of the modern doctrine of the sovereignty of the people, would be to destroy the very frame of government; it implied in its very statement an inconsistency and contradiction. The sovereignty of the people did not exist, even in the purest democracy, for in the purest democracy, there had always existed a medium or channel by which the sovereignty of the whole was exercised. A second objection was one which, if well founded, he should certainly feel of great weight: he meant that which regarded the honour and independence of the Irish parliament. But to what did this objection amount? When examined, it would be found that never was there a more groundless misapprehension of terms. For, first of all the very notion of compact, on which this union between the legislature of the two kingdoms was proposed to be founded, implied the independence of each; for unless there was independence, there could not be contract; and the very recognizing of the power of the parliament of Ireland to enter into this treaty, contained an acknowledgment of its distinct independent authority. The forms of proceeding in the present business, all went upon this supposition. His majesty had equally submitted to the legislature of each kingdom, the proposition of a union between them. What could more strongly imply, in its very nature, the power and independence of each, when it was left with them either to adopt or reject the plan proposed? If the proposed resolutions went to weaken in any considerable degree this principle of the independence of the Irish parliament, he should not wonder at the repugnance with which the proposition was received. But how stood the fact? This measure, so far from destroying the independence of Ireland, was calculated to strengthen and consolidate that independence, by rendering her a part of the proudest and most solid independence that ever was enjoyed. A similar objection had been started at the time of the Scottish union, but though vehemently urged upon that occasion, it was not allowed. And what had been the conse-

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quence of that event? Had the rank which Scotland held among nations been diminished? Had its dignity been sacrificed, or its prosperity curtailed? Quite the reverse. Before the union, England and Scotland, were, in fact, less independent than when they afterwards composed the kingdom of Great Britain. By this union, each kingdom had become more independent of foreign nations; each country had become more powerful, and had increased in prosperity. In like manner, supposing this legislative union took place, he would insist upon it, that not only no individual would suffer in dignity, rank, or condition, but that in a national view they would receive an addition. It was for the general interests of the empire to consult the interests of every component part of it. In providing for the security of that country, they were at the same time making provision for the common security of the British empire. And what could be adduced as a more powerful motive than this, that both countries were assailed by a common enemy, whose aim was, to destroy Great Britain by making Ireland the medium of that mischief; just as, previous to the union with Scotland, it was the aim of France to make that country subservient to their insidious designs? At present, there seemed no principle of resistance to the tyrannical power of France in Europe, but by Great Britain; and in the relative situation of these different countries, and particularly in the present situation of Ireland, that country could only look for support to Great Britain. The promoters of the Irish rebellion were fully sensible of this truth; they well knew that the independence of Ireland was materially involved in its connexion with Great Britain; and that if this connexion with Britain were once dissolved, Ireland would not thereby become independent, but would rather fall under the dominion of France. Such was the situation of Ireland, if left unconnected with this country, that it could not oppose increased resistance to increased danger. And if this were properly considered, the propriety would appear of consolidating the interests of both countries, in order to make a successful stand against the common enemy.

After apologising to the House for having engrossed so much of its time in going over these topics, lord Grenville said, he should move that the Resolutions of the Commons be read *pro forma*; he should then move, that the House do agree with the said resolutions; after which he purposed to move, that the resolutions be laid before his majesty, in the form of a joint address of both Houses, with an humble request that his majesty would lay them before the parliament of Ireland, at what time to his majesty should seem most proper. Lord Grenville then moved, "That the several Resolutions communicated by the Commons to this House, at a conference on the 18th of February last, respecting the means of Improving, and Perpetuating the Connexion between Great Britain and Ireland, and of augmenting the strength, power, and resources of the British Empire, be now read."

Earl *Fitzwilliam*, said it was not his intention to follow the noble lord through all his statements; and his reason was shortly this, that he meant to press the impropriety under the present situation of affairs, of discussing the subject at all. Avoiding, therefore, the question, whether the measure would be a benefit to Ireland or not, he should contend, that in this, the moment of greatest distress in which this country had been involved, it would weaken, instead of strengthen the means of resistance to the enemy. The parliament of Ireland had explicitly given their negative to the measure. Did any one know the evils existing in Ireland? A rebellion raged against the government. There was, as the noble lord had properly stated, a disunion between the ranks and distinctions of men. Would any man say, that a legislative union could at the present moment, remedy the evils complained of? Was it a matter of course, that, whatever those evils were, they could be removed immediately by an incorporated union? Did the noble lord mean to say, that to the legislature of Ireland these evils were owing? If they were, it must be attributable to the influence prevailing in that legislature. Might not the same influence prevail in the incorporated legislature? Where, then, would be the remedy? You must look, therefore, to different ones, and of whatever nature they may be, none can be effectual but by unanimity. Upon the subject of the distinctions between the orders, would they be remedied by an incorporated union? He had heard, indeed, an insinuation thrown out. But had the House or the people of Ireland, any thing of greater weight than this insinuation? If it was meant to conciliate the Catholics and the

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lower orders of the people, and this was to be done by an incorporated union, it would first be necessary to show them how much they would be benefited by it. Many, who were amongst the brightest ornaments of the state, were at present shut out of the legislature of this country. Who would tell him that the Protestant interest would be endangered by the admission of a Catholic lord into the House? Yet this, with all the niggardly jealousy, fit only for the darkest minds, was refused. Did any one at this time of day believe that the family of the Stuarts would be supported by the Catholics? And yet the benches of the House were bare of those, who, in point of birthright, had as much right to a seat in that House as any of their lordships. The noble lord had said that the tests required in the army of Ireland and in the army of England were different. They were so. In Ireland they had admitted the Catholics into the army; in England they were excluded. Would the Catholics then, be conciliated by getting into a more narrow-minded legislature? An incorporated union did not promise that which they required: it put them rather at a greater distance. The whole arguments of the noble lord tended to show, that both countries, when incorporated, would be stronger and better. But the inconveniencies stated as likely to arise from a separate legislature, had existed from the most ancient times. It was not from 1782 only, but long before that period, that all acts of imperial concern had been done by the Irish parliament. In the declaration of war in 1757 and in 1778, his majesty had communicated such declaration to the Irish parliament. They had the power of deliberating upon it, and, of course, of deciding. The House, then, had the experience of ages, that the dangers apprehended from a separate legislature had not arisen.—It was next to be considered, whether this was the proper time for a union. On the part of Great Britain he would say—Do you wish to introduce into the British parliament the rebellion of Ireland? Do you wish to introduce the representatives of Ireland? Representatives elected by the free electors of Ireland? Oh! no—by British bayonets. Such, should there be a dissolution, under such auspices, must the general election be carried on;—with an army not only in possession of the sword, but having the law at its disposal. Could Great Britain, then, have any thing but the representatives of an army? Was this the body which their lordships desired to have? Was this the period in which it was wished to introduce such representatives? He should now proceed to state something personal to himself. A representation of the circumstances under which he went to Ireland had been given, and it was upon that point that he begged to give some explanation. "I have understood," said his lordship, "that it has been stated in another place, that during my administration in Ireland, I was never required to retract what I had been directed by government to propose. If it has been stated that I never received orders to bring forward the question of Catholic emancipation on the part of government, I admit that statement to be true. But in justification of the part I took at that period (and in my conscience I believe the events that occurred have led to the evils that now exist, and have stamped the doom of that ill-fated country) it is necessary that to these statements I should add a short history of the transaction. Yielding to the argument of not wishing to entangle government in difficulties upon the subject at that period, I admit that under orders clearly understood by me, not to give rise to or bring forward the question of Catholic emancipation on the part of government, I assumed the government of Ireland. But in yielding to this argument, I entered my protest against resisting the question, if it should be brought forward from any other quarter; and I made most distinct declarations, that in case of its being so brought forward, it should receive my full support. With these declarations I assumed the government of Ireland. This I state upon my honour.—His lordship returning to the subject of the union, said, that whether the object proposed was good or not, he should contend that the circumstances of the times, with a rebellion raging in Ireland, made it impossible to incorporate it at the present moment. For these reasons, convinced of the impropriety of discussing the subject at present, he should move the previous question.

The Marquis of *Lansdown* said, that he cordially concurred in every thing that was asserted by the noble earl in praise of the Roman Catholics. He confessed there were to be found among them characters that would prove ornaments to that House if they were admitted to the honours they ought to enjoy. He

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must observe, however, that this subject had no relation to the question immediately before the House, or to the situation of the Irish Roman Catholics, though the adoption of the proposed union might ultimately tend to do the Roman Catholics the justice they deserved. But now, as a large and general question, he was by no means surprised that at first sight it was objected to as improper to be discussed at the present moment. Most undoubtedly such a measure should be the work of peace and of time: it should be the result of dispassionate judgment and of calm consideration. It was not, however, the first question to be examined: there were others, the consideration of which should precede that of the union, and one of them was, whether it was possible for the affairs of Ireland to go on as they are now governed? The other, if an union was to take place, whether it should be a parliamentary or an incorporate union? Can the affairs of Ireland go on, if they continue to be governed as they now are; or do they require some remedy? If they do, is the projected union that remedy? This was the point to be considered; but sure he was, that it was morally impossible that things should go on as they now were in Ireland. When young, he had seen a dispatch from a then minister to a noble duke when lord lieutenant, in which the minister says, "how comes it to pass that the laws have lost all energy, the magistrates all authority, and the parliament all reverence, in Ireland?" The noble duke answered, that they were lost by a shameful inattention to every duty; in consequence of which government was verging to a total dissolution, and it would soon be impossible to enforce obedience to the laws but through the medium of the military. This was the case in 1759. It was unnecessary to observe what had passed since. But he would proceed to show why he thought that the Irish government could not go on as it was now constituted. He would only allude to public acts which had occurred a few years back. In 1791 the Roman Catholics first presented their petition to the Irish parliament: it must be in the recollection of every noble lord how that petition was received, and what provocation it occasioned. In 1792 they presented it again; but it met with the same contumely as before. In 1793, the Catholics and the Protestants became somewhat warmer against each other. The Protestant ascendancy was established, and had recourse to the interference of the grand juries to concur with them in discountenancing the Roman Catholic body. The Roman Catholics observed a more temperate behaviour, and came over hither to represent their grievances. Their petition was graciously attended to; and they were immediately relieved, though not to the extent of a total emancipation. In 1793, every thing remained quiet: great gratitude was expected for the favours conferred on the Catholics; but on the contrary, they showed no obligation to the parliament of Ireland: and hence the loss of authority by that parliament. In 1794, ministers, irritated at this ingratitude, had recourse to measures which produced great discontent. They sent over the noble earl (Fitzwilliam), whose system he was sorry had not been proceeded on: during his short administration, however, of about three months, all was tranquil—all was well affected and loyal; there then existed no foreign connexion with the enemy. But afterwards they had recourse to measures of coercion. In 1796 these coercive measures became more severe: the indemnity and insurrection bills were passed. Then an ambassador was first sent to France from the discontented party (and much he feared that a treaty between France and the United Irishmen still subsisted); an armament sailed from Brest in consequence of it to invade Ireland. In 1798, another invasion took place, and in 1799 we are assured by high authority, that a Directory is now fitting and organizing insurrection and rebellion throughout the country. Antrim and many counties in the north are proclaimed in a state of disturbance, and rebels are hourly expecting assistance from France. Now, a moment's reflection must show how rapidly the people of Ireland had passed from one extreme to the other; and if the country could be brought to such violence without any check, could a government so abused continue?—The noble marquis then adverted to the attainder of lord Edward Fitzgerald after his death and without any trial. This was a precedent far more alarming than any on the Statute book. This was an act passed by the Irish parliament, which not even rebellion could justify, and which, if it was not tyranny, he knew of nothing that deserved that name. Was it possible for a government

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where such acts were passed, to continue for any time? There was no remedy for all these evils but a union. The Orange and the Green, the Dissenter, Catholic, and Churchman, when attacked by a common enemy, call out by instinct for a union between each other. A union was at all times desirable; at present it was indispensable. The resolutions respecting it should be acted on immediately, for our very existence was at stake.

As to what passed in 1782, making the exception of one person, the cabinet at that time consisted of as great and worthy men as any that ever existed in this country. They were ten in number, and only three of them were dead; consequently there were six of them to bear testimony to the truth of what he was about to say. He had made some communication, in 1782, about a plan which he had much at heart, but which was not proceeded upon. It did not go the length of a dispatch. It related to what might be called the expense of the system which was carried under the two parliaments—not the corruption, but the reputation of the corruption of the two governments. This had nothing to do with a union. Those who had taken a share in the proceedings of 1782 had entered into no pledge whatever about a union. It was extraordinary that any one should refer to it on the present occasion. Most clear it was, that those who favoured the idea of a union at this moment were no more acting in violation of any pledge in 1782, than those who were now opposing that idea, neither having entered into any pledge upon the subject. He could not conceive how any man possessed of a clear understanding could think of introducing the idea of any pledge to do nothing as between the two countries since the proceedings of 1782. The present plan could not be said to grow out of those of 1782, any more than those of 1782 could be considered as a bar to anyf uture proceeding.

Having then, dismissed as irrelevant, the proceedings of 1782, he came to the consideration of the point of the union of force—a union of armies, for instance. Unless there was such a union of the armies of the two countries, as would enable us to say that there was but one army, he would say with regard to the affairs of the British empire, "chaos is come again." The navy should also be united. It should not be made up of patch work, as if one part of the empire was to furnish a ship and a half, another a quarter, and so on. There should be one and only one navy, furnished by the united zeal of all parts of the whole empire. There should also be but one law for the two countries. He threw no slur on the mode in which justice was administered in Ireland; but no man of sense would be sorry that it should be administered in Ireland as it is in England. Why, then, the two countries ought to have one army, one navy, one law. The next point was commerce; but here he would observe, that the law was paramount to all ideas of commerce; for, indeed, if a man were to ask him whether he would give up his pound of sugar or his Habeas Corpus act, or whether he would give up his trial by jury or the pound of indigo, he should say he had no invincible attachment to indigo, or sugar, but that he had to the Habeas Corpus act and the trial by jury. The next point was a point of finance. Ireland had derived great advantages, in a financial point of view, from this country; but it was not to be expected that these advantages should continue without an union; because without a union, there was no security for their continuance. There must therefore be between this country and Ireland a system of union, as it were, offensive and defensive, against the common enemy. What was the next point? A mode, or general system of taxation; and, by the way, under this head, an honourable an efficient measure might be adopted for taxing the absentees of Ireland, who had been much complained of: many of them he knew to be conscientious and honourable men, and if equitably taxed, they would cheerfully pay the impost. These were the great points of union which he wished to see carried into effect. Some might say, "You have the greater part of them already." To which he would answer: "I would have a union, that we may be sure of having them always, instead of their being, as they are now, subject to the affection, and, perhaps, jealousy of two bodies of people. I think that this consideration is essential to the strength of the whole of the British empire."

But there was one point on which his mind doubted, as to the mode of carrying a union into effect, and that was the union of the parliaments. Upon all the other points his mind was clearly satisfied. He had no doubt that the landed and commercial interests in Ireland would be be-

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nefited by it, not in some local respects, but upon a general scale. It had been said that the union would be the ruin of Dublin. He did not think so. He had a very good estate in the neighbourhood of Dublin; and he believed that his estate would be worth more after the union than it was now. It was not on that account that he spoke in favour of the measure. He was above any such consideration. He was in favour of the measure on account of its apparent general utility. With regard to the subject of taxation and commerce, it was more likely to be in favour of the people of Ireland than against them. But this subject was so well treated by dean Tucker, who had introduced into a few pages of his pamphlet more sense, as well as more patriotism, than was to be found in whole volumes, that he should be doing injustice to the author if he attempted to convey his meaning in any words but his own. He should therefore only mention this matter, by way of informing their lordships, that in this pamphlet they would find every thing that he could wish to say upon the subject. As to the question of an addition of one hundred members to the English House of Commons, and of their being outvoted, he was under no such apprehension; the minister knew too well the advantages of one battalion of guards to neglect another. There was another point which ought to be well settled before any union could be of any avail—that was, the disposition of the people of Ireland. He knew not how far they might misunderstand their true interests, nor to what violence they might be led. Upon this subject it was manifest that ministers had misled themselves: they were ignorant of the dispositions of the parliament of Ireland, for if they had thought they would have been outvoted, they would not have brought the subject forward. With regard to the Catholics, their emancipation was a thing which it was vain to attempt to stop. It was silly to say that we were sorry that any thing was done for the Catholics; we ought to rejoice at it, and cheerfully finish what we had begun. There was nothing to fear from it. Those who thought there was, ought to look at the condition of the pope, and the state of France; they would then see that there was no fear from any body of men on account of the religion they professed. That species of deception was gone: "The question," said the noble marquis, "is not what religion you shall have but whether you shall be permitted to have any? It is not whether this, or that religion shall be destroyed; but whether all religion shall be destroyed? Under this situation of things, every good man is called upon to join the standard of Jesus Christ—to keep the religion of Jesus Christ; any religion is better than none; at all events, unite to oppose and keep from entering among you those who have no religion, and who are enemies to all."

A member whom he did not know personally (Mr. Dobbs), but whose speeches in the Irish House he admired, had said of the people of Ireland, "treat them fairly and justly, avow at once your object, and if it be just, I will pledge myself for their acquiescence." He would add to the speech of that sensible man, and say, do not come forward with yuor hesitating, "perhaps," or "it may be," or "we will consider," or any such ambiguity; but come boldly forward at once, and tell them sincerely what you intend doing. Speak to them as men that are free, and determined to be free. In all the affairs of life sincerity has succeeded nine times out of ten: and although the mass of the people of Ireland are to be pitied for want of education, yet I know, from the experience of forty years, that liberality is never ill requited by them. And here I am induced to allude to a whimsical trifle, which I am informed is well expressed in the Irish language:—a person is accused by the landlady of a public house with having stolen her poker; he swears the most bitter oaths that he has not; but, says she, you have not pledged your honour. Oh! says he, touch my honour, touch my life. There's your paltry poker! This was, to a considerable extent, descriptive of the national character, and showed how much might be expected from being plain with such a people. But to come to persons of education among the Irish people; the dissenters, for instance; there was not, he believed, a better informed body of men in the world than they were; and they added to their information a firmness that was peculiar to themselves. He should therefore like to know what they thought of this proposed union. It would be better for ministers to collect this species of information than to talk about the competence of parliament. "I hate the word competence," said the noble mar-

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quis; "I hate the word rights. I would not be within a hundred miles of the discussion of either, if I could help it. I care nothing for your majority of five in the House of Commons. I would rather adhere to the opinion of one sensible unbiassed man than a majority of seventy others who were heated by a party debate or the views of a faction. I do not think that ministers have much real knowledge upon the subject; it is pretty clear they have not from what has happened. I have no knowledge myself upon this point I am no dissenter, nor am I a Catholic. But for my own part, I should have great confidence in the judgment, as well as the conduct of the present lord lieutenant. He is of no party. He is brave, and he is wise; for he is cautious, as well as intrepid. Let him pledge his honour to the propriety of any measure, and I shall be much disposed to assent to it."—But whatever was to be done, there should be no tricking in the case. In trifling times and trivial circumstances that might do, but not in the present; and unless there was an entire union of mind, the thing had better be abandoned altogether. As to the union with Scotland, he should pass it over, for it had in reality no bearing upon this case. This was a very important question. It came home to the doors of their lordships. The present was an awful period. The contest was a serious contest. It would lead, unless wisdom interfered, to a dismal conflict between the rich and the poor, in which if they regarded the rich as foes, the poor would be the greatest sufferers; but it was difficult to make them properly understand that truth. Great care should be taken to prevent the civil strife to which the contest in which we were engaged had so direct a tendency. There was now an executive directory in Ireland communicating with France. Ministers had not proper information, upon that subject, for they knew not where it was, else they would surely put an end to its proceedings. It was his wish that due caution should be used to preserve the British empire entire amidst the convulsions of surrounding states. He wished to see Great Britain and Ireland stand like two rocks in the sea, unmoved and unaffected by storms or tempests: to see their inhabitants join heart and hand for the preservation of property, of law, of order, of morality, of religion—all which they would lose unless they adopted kind and even generous measures towards each other. Upon these considerations he felt inclined to adopt all the resolutions except that which related to the addition of 100 members to the House of Commons. He was astonished that this point had made so little impression: it seemed as if it was of no more importance than if so many flies were to be added. However, if others were satisfied, he should have nothing farther to say. If there were errors in the plan, he hoped they would be seen in time to be effectually corrected.

Earl *Camden* said:—After the observations which have dropt from the noble marquis, I am desirous of taking the first opportunity of recurring to the state of Ireland, previous to my being commanded by his majesty to repair thither, to show to your lordships that the noble marquis is not authorized in the inferences which he has made, and the arguments he has attempted to draw from those observations. The noble marquis has endeavoured to show that the misfortunes, under which Ireland at present labours, have been owing to the recall of the noble earl (Fitzwilliam), and to the conduct of the administration in Ireland subsequent to that period. It will become me to show, and I flatter myself I can prove to your lordships, that the disaffection, and the disorders which have sprung from that disaffection, are to be dated from a period long antecedent to my arrival in Ireland, and that no act of severity has taken place (which has been authorized by the government) that has not been preceded by acts of outrage at first, and by acts of rebellion at last on the part of the disaffected. Although the conduct of the Irish government, before I was commanded to assume the office of lord lieutenant, has had much abler advocates than I am, I think it material to explain to your lordships, that it was not until after a report of a secret committee in 1793, that measures were taken in Ireland with a view to meet the growing spirit of disorder which began to show itself in that kingdom. It was not until after ample proof of their necessity that the gunpowder and convention bills were passed; by the enactment of the first, the importation of arms and ammunition, and the removal of gunpowder from one place to another, without licence, were forbidden; by that of the second, the meeting and subsequent resolutions of conventions, which were established to overawe the

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parliament, were prevented: and as those acts, completely answered the end to which they were directed, it became necessary for those who at that time led the opinions of the disaffected to seek for other methods by which they might continue to direct such operation, and as they were unable to succeed in their attempts, in the open and undisguised manner in which they had been accustomed to conduct themselves, a more secret method was adopted to carry on their intrigues and to lead their followers to the point they have always aimed at—a revolution in that country.

Having now traced the measures which were taken, previous to earl Fitzwilliam's arrival in Ireland, I will proceed to remark, that even during the happy period of his residence, that kingdom was not free from disorder. The noble earl must recollect that disturbances to some extent broke out in the county of Cavan, and, in order to quell them, he was under the necessity of employing the military force. Certainly, not long after my arrival, some outrages prevailed in Roscommon and in the adjoining counties, to the extinguishing of which it was necessary to apply the military force: and I thought it my duty to send lord Carhampton into the county of Roscommon for that purpose. By his zeal and ability those disturbances were speedily quelled, and for several months after that time the kingdom appeared in a state of perfect tranquillity; and as these disorders in Roscommon originated in a wish to lower rents and to evade taxes, and as those concerned in them endeavoured to carry their plans into execution by a system of terror, and no trace of disappointment in the loss the kingdom had received by the recall of the noble earl was to be observed, there is no ground for saying that these outrages proceeded from any public feeling in consequence of that event: and indeed the little interest the public showed on the rejection of the Catholic bill, to which he was known to be friendly, and the tranquil state of Ireland (except the disturbances in Roscommon, which were not connected with it) must be convincing to your lordships' minds, that this recall was not considered in Ireland in the manner to which the noble marquis has alluded.

My lords, at the close of 1795, and at the beginning of 1796, the system of the United Irishmen, which has since brought Ireland to its present condition, began to show itself. There existed secret machinations which encouraged, throughout a great portion of the north of Ireland, dreadful outrages, nocturnal attacks upon the loyal, assassinations of magistrates, and murders of witnesses. Every morning brought to me the dreadful catalogue of outrages perpetrated on the preceding night; and it was not until the situation of the country most loudly called for it, that the insurrection bill was passed—an act to which the noble marquis has alluded in terms of marked severity. This act ought to be construed into an act rather of caution than of severity. This act although passed in March 1796, was not acted upon till November in that year; and it will be incumbent on me to show that the passing of this act is not to be construed as originating the correspondence which has existed between Ireland and France. The intercourse between the leaders of the disaffected and the French Directory subsisted notoriously long before that period, as appears by the trial of Jackson, and many other documents. But, as it has been asserted by traitors, who were examined before the Secret Committee of the House of Lords in Ireland, that the introduction of the insurrection bill was one of the causes of their correspondence with France, and the rejection of the proposition for parliamentary reform another cause, I have thought it necessary to advert to these two circumstances; and, having answered the first observation, to refer your lordships upon the last to the report of the Secret Committee of the Irish House of Lords, which is now on your table, where you will find that Mr. Ponsonby's motion was rejected on the 15th of May 1797. The message to France is avowed by those traitors to have taken place in April 1797.

My lords, although it was hoped the Insurrection act was calculated to meet these disorders, it was found that the spirit was only checked. The continuation of midnight assassination, a system of terror towards the loyal, the disarming of the yeomanry corps, and various other means, most strongly evinced that this evil still subsisted in the country, but principally in the north of Ireland. In consequence general Lake's proclamation for disarming that district was issued in the beginning of March 1797. From the activity and good conduct with which that measure was carried into execution, very extensive benefits accrued; and govern-

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ment having fortunately become possessed of papers, seized at a meeting in Belfast, were enabled to develope the plan of the United Irishmen to the public, by referring them to a Secret Committee of the two Houses of parliament. In consequence of the measures taken subsequent to this proclamation, immense quantities of arms were seized, and, what was still more satisfactory to me, very considerable numbers of persons, struck with remorse for their past crimes, took advantage of the pardon which was held out in that proclamation, and professed to return, and in many cases, I believe, did return to their allegiance. The country wore an aspect much more promising in consequence of these measures, and its inhabitants were returning to a state of order and tranquillity. The rupture, however, of the negociations at Lisle, renewed the activity of the disaffected. They were led to expect the assistance of their old ally, and very shortly after that event was known, circumstances connected with it began to appear in Ireland. The disaffection before this period had been chiefly confined to the north of Ireland. It now became the anxious business of the traitors to endeavour to extend it to the south; and as they were aware that the arguments by which they inflamed the north, such as the establishment of a republic, and infusing other notions more suited to their feelings, would have no weight in the south and in the west, they succeeded in raising a commotion against the payment of tythes in one part of the country, they disturbed other parts of it by fabricated resolutions of the Orangemen, calculated to alarm and to harass the affrighted and ignorant Catholic, till at last they were induced to commit acts of open rebellion. Attacks in large bodies upon more than one village, in order to seize arms and to carry them away; and attacks upon the king's forces in many instances, called for the proclamation of the 30th of March 1798.

My lords, I trust I have shown that to this period every act of severity with which I have been charged, has been preceded by acts of outrage in the first place, of insurrection in the next, and lastly by acts of rebellion. I am not desirous of sheltering myself under acts of parliament, or the thanks of the two Houses for those measures which I thought it my duty to pursue; but your lordships will have the goodness to advert to the fact, that scarcely one (I believe not one) of the strong measures with which I have been charged, is either not sanctioned by an act of the legislature, or a joint approbation of the two Houses, of the conduct I had pursued. When I found that the object of the traitors in Ireland was, to overturn that established form of government I had sworn to maintain, I resisted, by every means within my reach, such attempt. If, in carrying into execution the necessary measures for this object, any measures of extraordinary severity were requisite, I lament them as much as any one of your lordships. If any acts of cruelty were perpetrated, I aver to your lordships they were never authorized by me, and were always punished when they could be brought home to the individual who committed them.—In consequence of the measures taken subsequent to the proclamation of the 30th of March 1798, immense quantities of arms were seized, which had been manufactured for the purpose of assisting in a more formidable insurrection than even did burst forth in that kingdom; and if, by the issuing of that proclamation, and by the seizure of the committee at Bond's, I am charged with the crime of hastening the rebellion, I plead guilty to the charge; and of having prevented by the seizure of the leaders, and the disarming of their followers, a most formidable and well-concerted attack, and of inducing a rabble, ill-led and ill-disciplined, to break out into acts of open hostility, instead of waiting till they could be assisted by the French, or had leisure to confer with, and to be directed by any new leaders who might have presented themselves to them.—The last act to which I shall think it necessary to allude, is the proclamation of the 23rd of May 1798. His majesty's troops were attacked at various posts on the 22d of May, and some of the outposts driven in, and others fell a sacrifice to the fury and cruelty of the rebels. The transactions in consequence of these open acts of aggression are so fresh in your lordships recollection, that I will not detain you longer on this part of what I have to offer to you. From being little accustomed to speak in parliament, I fear I may not have expressed myself as clearly and as distinctly as the subject calls for; but I trust I have convinced your lordships, that the disaffection existed to an alarming degree long previous to my arrival in Ireland, and that acts of severity were not resorted to, until they were imperiously called for.

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I am happy to think, from the tenor of the rest of the noble marquis's speech, that we are not likely to disagree upon the principal points of this night's debate. Although we may differ as to the causes, it seems to be universally agreed, that some steps, in the present state of Ireland, are necessary to be taken, and some new measures adopted. In endeavouring to express my opinion of the advantages of a union, I trust no misapprehension will be entertained, that I do not consider the Irish parliament with all that respect and attachment, which is due to them from me. Constituted as the kingdom of Ireland now is, I should be both ungrateful and unjust, did I not say that, under those circumstances, that legislature has acted with a wisdom, a spirit, and a promptitude which have most materially assisted the government of that country in saving Ireland from the dangers of internal conspiracy and foreign invasion. But although the country owes them much, although I personally feel and acknowledge a debt I can never repay, it does not follow that if a more advantageous form of government is proposed, the former good acts of any government should prevent me from considering, if that better form cannot be introduced. Your lordships are all aware of the different sects and parties of which Ireland is composed. In order to remedy the difficulties to which she is exposed from that circumstance, Catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform have been proposed. It is impossible for me not to join these two measures together; for it cannot be imagined that the smallest advantage would arise, even according to the arguments of the friends to these measures, by the adoption of the one without the other. The Catholics labour now under no disability except the not voting and sitting in parliament, and the not enjoying certain offices of rank in the state. Were it reconcileable to the principles of our constitution to take off this disability, who would thereby be benefited? A few persons who could sit in the House of Lords, and a few commoners who might be elected for seats in the House of Commons. Would it, or could it afford any satisfaction to the lower orders of people, or even to the middling ranks of the Catholics? It would not. But if this measure were accompanied by parliamentary reform, although some possible satisfaction might momentarily be given to those misguided persons, yet the two measures joined together are so fraught with danger, that I should expect this kingdom and Ireland to be very speedily separated from each other, if they were carried. If, however, the introduction of these measures affords a plausible ground of complaint, and if it is impossible to remedy these inconveniences in a separate legislature, would it not be proper to attempt a united one, where the argument would not be as plausible, and where, if it were proper to attend to it, it might be done with less danger to the state?

There are those in Ireland who have thought that the independence of that kingdom was wounded by the introduction of the measure of a union. This argument is used by those for whom I entertain the most unfeigned regard, and as the feeling which produces it is entitled to the utmost indulgence, and indeed ought to be treated with the greatest respect, I should be glad that I could urge any argument which was likely to weigh upon their minds, and to persuade them that the very offer of a union in the manner it is proposed, is an actual acknowledgment of that independence which they love and admire. This proposition, if adopted, proves that two independent nations, after full and mature deliberation, were of opinion, that a union of both would more effectually secure their safety and perpetuate their real independence, than continuing under the sort of separation and independence they now possess. Whoever affirms that the Irish and the English governments can act upon different principles, knows little of the two countries; and if they act upon the same, there is a certainty that the government and the parliament of Ireland will be charged to be under English influence. There are those even amongst the best friends of the connexion, who entertain this opinion, and who, sometimes, cannot entirely estrange themselves from this feeling. This is a subject which ought to be treated of with delicacy, and more particularly from me; but I nevertheless think it my duty to observe, that this jealousy is likely to be done away, when the two legislatures shall be united, and that those feelings which are thus excited will be remedied, when there shall be one imperial legislature, not only for the government of Great Britain and Ireland, but of the world; and can any man think his situation and his consequence lessened, when, in addition to the contemplation of

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the affairs of his own country, to remedy which he is not less competent, he is entrusted with those of the whole world, in which the imperial parliament would bear, as that of Great Britain now does, so great and so deserved a sway?—It has also been asserted, that there was great danger in alienating the minds of your friends at this moment, by persisting in this measure; and that, as the Irish House of Commons had declined to consider it, your lordships ought not to be called upon to discuss it. With respect to the minds of the loyal being alienated from the government by this measure, I am convinced that that danger is not to be apprehended. That body of men, to whom Ireland owes her late deliverance and her present safety, are truer friends to their country, than to suffer that loyalty to be shaken by such difference of opinion upon this measure, although it materially affects their feelings. With respect to the objection to discuss this subject since it has been declined by the House of Commons of Ireland, I consider that very declining as an argument for the discussion. Highly as I respect many of those persons who have declined even to consider this subject, I cannot but observe a degree of intemperance in that determination; and, inasmuch as the feelings of the Irish nation have been irritated by false colourings, and by unfounded representations, it becomes us to undeceive them, to enter calmly and temperately into its discussion; and I doubt not, from the able manner in which this subject has been treated, that great impressions will be made on the other side of the water.—I have many apologies to offer for trespassing on your lordships so long. I could not sit still under the imputations which have been thrown out, and I trust that your lordships are convinced that measures of severity were not recurred to, until the necessity of the case absolutely called for them, that no cruelties were authorized by the government of Ireland, and that whenever any complaints were made, the persons guilty of such conduct were punished. I heartily approve of the measure of a union, and am of opinion, that ministers have done their duty in bringing it forward at this period.

Marquis *Townshend* said, he should vote for the measure, but many things remained to be done before Ireland could recover from her present distressed situation. There ought to be resident magistrates, in order to enforce a due obedience to the laws. One very great evil was, the itinerant Catholic clergy, who went about the country giving absolution for the most enormous offences: while this was suffered, it was vain to hope to see order restored. The great object to be effected was, the amelioration of the morals of the people, and for this purpose the greatest exertions were necessary on the part of the magistrates and clergy. There was another practice in Ireland which called loudly for reform, and that was, the number of stewards and other persons, between the landlord and the tenant. This practice was injurious to the landlord, and extremely oppressive to the poor tenant. Unless steps were taken to remedy these evils, every attempt to render Ireland happy would be vain.

The Earl of *Darnley* said:—My lords; It is by no means my intention to oppose the motion. The noble secretary of state said on a former night, "after what has passed in Ireland, ought we not to come forward with a temperate and candid exposition of our intentions?" Undoubtedly, after what had taken place in Ireland, and after what had before been done by government with respect to that country, it became them to publish their intentions to the world, in order to convince the Irish nation that they meant to offer just and liberal terms for their acceptance; but I still think, that it would have been better if they had contented themselves with laying their propositions on the tables of the two Houses, without calling for any discussion, or any vote on the subject.—My lords, not only at this time, but at all other times since I first reflected on the subject, my mind has always led me to think, that on the abstract proposition, whether two countries in the relative situation in which Great Britain and Ireland stand could be too closely united, no difference of opinion can possibly exist; and I have farther always been induced to prefer the system of legislative union as the most likely ultimately to promote their mutual interests; but I have at the same time doubted very much, whether the measure, however desirable in itself, might be found practicable, and principally on account of the strong national prejudice against it, which existed in Ireland. Those suspicions have of late been confirmed to such a degree by what has taken place, that however I might be

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disposed to admit the expediency of the measure, I cannot agree that it is also practicable. Those among your lordships who may be more intimately acquainted with Ireland, must have observed with me, that on every thing which relates to that country there exists in this, a degree of apathy, and still more, a degree of ignorance which is altogether astonishing, and can only be accounted for by supposing that Englishmen are disposed to measure every thing by the standard of their own country, than which nothing can be more fallacious when applied to Ireland: for I really believe that, in many respects, the inhabitants of no two countries on the face of the globe are so essentially different. But really, my lords, I have often thought that Englishmen, for the most part, are as well acquainted with China as they are with Ireland. Hence arises the errors into which they every day fall on this subject; and hence they have very much misconceived the state of the present case in many respects, and in none more than in the ideas which they have formed on the nature of the opposition which this measure has to encounter on the other side of the water. I have understood even, that it has been called a faction and a cabal, which is so far from being the case, that unless I am very much deceived, it speaks almost the united sense of the whole Irish nation—not, indeed, of the whole nation taken numerically, for unfortunately the majority of the population of Ireland is incapable of forming any adequate judgment on this or any other subject; and if they were, their minds are so tainted with the poison of French principles, so estranged from this country by the machinations of their Jacobin leaders, that on that account any opinion which they could form would be of but little value as applied to this question. I speak not therefore of them, but of the middle ranks of every description throughout the country, the country gentlemen, the yeomen, the merchants and manufacturers, the learned bodies both collectively and individually; these persons, the strength and sinews of the country, the zealous friends of British connexion, and to whose exertions, during the course of the last Summer, we are principally indebted for the preservation of Ireland; these, I fear, are your opponents; and I confess I am extremely anxious that nothing should take place here that can tend to alienate the minds of these persons, already sufficiently irritated and inflamed. I may be mistaken in my opinion on this subjest, and I hope I am; but nothing which I have seen or heard induces me to believe that this most respectable and important part of the Irish nation is not decidedly hostile to every idea of union. It may be said, that their opinions are founded upon mere national prejudice. But, is any thing in the world so difficult to subdue as a national prejudice, especially when attacked in the open and violent manner in which this has been? We all know that Peter the Great, in the plenitude of his power, was unable to induce the Russians even to part with their beards; and although I am very far from thinking the national prejudice of the Irish is of no greater importance than this, it is so far a case in point, that I fear it will be found equally stubborn.—Much has been said on the subject of the union with Scotland, and it has been improperly adduced as a parallel instance with the present. I own I can discover very little similarity between the two cases; for, besides the many other points in which they differ, the opposition in Scotland to the union was, in the proper sense of the word, faction originally, and nothing else; and the populace who did not oppose it at first, were instigated by that faction to acts of violence: besides, it differed from the present case in this essential point, that when the union was first proposed in the parliament of Scotland, it was resolved to enter on the discussion by a majority of 64.*—Being of opinion, therefore, that it would have been better in every point of view if the discussion of this subject had never been entertained in this place, it would ill become me to enter into the discussion of its merits; there is, however, one point on which I cannot avoid giving a decided opinion—I mean the competence of parliament, which has, on this occasion, been called in question, and which I cannot help considering as one of the unfortunate consequences which have resulted from the manner in which this business has been brought forward. But it appears clearly to my mind, that if you question the competence of parliament to enact this or any thing, you question the right by which you sit in this House; you question the right of your sovereign to his crown, and plunge at once into the chaos of Jacobinism.—My lords, there are only

* See Vol. 6, Appendix, p. cxxxii.

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two ways in which a great measure of this nature can be carried into effect—voluntary assent, or coercion. With respect to the first, it is at present by no means likely to be obtained: with respect to the latter, I will not for a moment suppose that this country, even if it were practicable, would ever imitate what we have so justly reprobated in our enemies. No, my lords; we may unite, perhaps, but we shall never fraternize with Ireland——

"Dii meliora piis, erroremque hostibus illum:" every idea of this sort has, indeed, been very properly disclaimed, and is on every account perfectly out of the question. Feeling, therefore, for the reasons which I have stated to the House, that it is much more likely to produce mischief than advantage, I must still persist in thinking, that it would have been much better if we could have avoided in this place any discussion of the propositions which we have received from the Commons: since, however, your lordships have thought otherwise, it is by no means my intention to offer any opposition to them, or, indeed, to give any opinion on their merits, but, without taking any part in it myself, shall leave the decision to the wisdom of the House.

Lord *Hobart* said, that after the many years he had resided in Ireland and the knowledge he had of the conduct of the Irish parliament, he never could hear that conduct attacked in the manner it had been by the noble marquis without standing up in its vindication. He would venture to assert, that the proceedings of the Irish parliament for a number of years manifested as active and as successful exertions, on the part of individuals, for the attainment of great national objects, as could be found in the annals of any country. Such, indeed, was the sentiment he entertained of the conduct of the Irish parliament, that no measure that could be proposed which led to its extinction would ever have his support, if he was not fully convinced that a parliament constituted as that is, and necessarily must remain whilst the legislatures of the two kingdoms are distinct, never can give satisfaction to the people of Ireland—He meant to say, that a Protestant parliament can never satisfy a Catholic country, and a Catholic parliament is incompatible with British connexion. Catholic emancipation without parliamentary reform was so little calculated to quiet the minds of the people, that those who professed to have that object in view, were unavoidably led to connect them together. Indeed, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, a gentleman who preferred the character of a rebel to that of a hypocrite, had candidly stated to the Irish House of Commons, "That he would not allay the fears of the Protestant monopolists, for what in the true spirit of political bigotry they call their Protestant ascendancy, by stating, that as the boroughs continue in the hands of Protestant proprietors, centuries must pass away before the Catholics can participate in any considerable portion of the political power of their country. He was contending for the purity of the constitution, not for its abuses; he disclaimed contending for Catholic freedom, in the hope that the grant may be a dead letter." Upon the authority, therefore, of Mr. O'Connor, and indeed of almost all the publications upon the subject, their lordships were bound to consider Catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform as one measure, and that effected, they must look at the power of the Catholics completely established in the Irish parliament.—Under that impression they would do well to reflect upon the proceedings of the last Catholic parliament that sat in Ireland, or the parliament of James 2nd. Was not its very first act a repeal of the act of settlement, and could any of their lordships conceive, that the very first measure of any house of commons in Ireland, the majority of which shall be composed of Catholics, will not be the discussion of that question? Can any man, acquainted with the history and provisions of that act suppose, that the discussion of it in a parliament, unbiassed by the political impressions under which it passed, would terminate in any other result than its repeal? Could any of their lordships imagine, that, an examination into and revision of the forfeitures of 1690, in a Catholic parliament, forfeitures which were expressly incurred on account of the adherence of the Catholics to a sovereign who had lost his throne for his attachment to that religion, would lead to any conclusion, but the annulling of those forfeitures? Could their lordships be satisfied, that a Protestant church establishment would have any security against the protection of a Catholic parliament? Under the pressure of these sentiments, he was decidedly of opinion, that the Catholics can never be admitted to a seat in the Irish parliament,

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so long as it shall be thought necessary to maintain the present distribution of property, the continuance of the Protestant church establishment, and the connexion between Great Britain and Ireland.—With this view of the subject, he was reluctantly obliged to declare, that in his opinion, the necessity of an adherence to this principle, a necessity which he felt as strongly as he lamented it, would ever prevent the people of Ireland from being satisfied with their parliament; and it was not upon any speculative reasoning that he had adopted that opinion. It was from his observation of the effect of those important acquisitions, obtained for the people of Ireland, through the medium of their parliament. It was from a conviction, that the Irish parliament deserves a very different comment from that of the noble marquis, that he was persuaded, that constituted as it is, no measures that it can pursue will secure to it the confidence of the Irish people; and upon that ground his determination to support the question of a legislative union principally, if not entirely rested.—Having pointedly adverted to the proceedings of the Irish parliament, his lordship said, he would more particularly draw the attention of the House to the measures he had in contemplation, by reading an extract from a speech of Mr. Hutcheson (late Provost of Trinity College Dublin), which he had heard him deliver in 1793, a gentleman perfectly conversant in the affairs of Ireland: "Let us enumerate to our constituents, whom we are shortly to visit, the various blessings which we have obtained in a single reign; the limitation of our parliament, a free trade, the full participation of commercial intercourse with the British colonies in the West Indies and America, perfect security of personal liberty by the Habeas Corpus act, the benefit of all treaties in the fullest extent to Ireland, the independence of our legislature, the establishment of our final judicature, the principle adopted of assimilating our constitution with that of Great Britain, the place and pension bills, vacating the seats of certain pensioners and placemen, which will be the consequence of that principle, the comprehension of all our fellow subjects within the verge of the constitution, and the whole intended to be crowned by the appropriation of the revenue, the resting of it in responsible commissioners, and the reduction and limitation of pensions."—His lordship then proceeded to ask, if any noble lords who had attended to what he had taken the liberty to read to them, could agree with the noble marquis, that a legislative union had been rendered necessary, by the inattention of the Irish parliament to the welfare of their country, and would they not rather concur with him in opinion, that there is something so repugnant to the feelings of the people in the constitution of the Irish parliament, that its conduct, however beneficial to their general interests can never have the effect of producing that satisfaction which the uniform tenor of its proceedings, in persevering unremittingly to pursue the advancement of the real prosperity of Ireland, had so well intitled it to expect?—The noble marquis having adverted in rather harsh terms to the conduct of the Irish House of Commons, upon the subject of the Catholics in 1791, 1792, and 1793, lord Hobart desired to be permitted to make a few observations upon that business. It was certainly true, that the members of the Irish House of Commons looked with much apprehension to any steps that might lead even to the progressive emancipation of the Catholics, and acting under the impulse of that apprehension in 1791, there was not found one member who was disposed to present the Catholic petition to the House in 1792. It was however presented, and rejected; about eighteen persons only having voted for it; but he was not aware that it was rejected with contumely, nor did he remember that those members who were afterwards the most strenuous supporters of what is now termed Catholic emancipation, were the advocates in its favour.—The noble marquis was undoubtedly correct in saying, that a very sudden change was soon afterwards produced in the sentiments of the Irish House of Commons upon the subject; for, that in 1793 that petition which had the year before been rejected by so large a majority, was then acceded to in its fullest extent; but the alteration in the opinion of the House was not liable to the invidious interpretation that had been put upon it by the noble marquis.—The parliament of Ireland, feeling how peculiarly their interests upon the Catholic subject are interwoven with the interests of the king himself, looking to him as the sworn protector of their religion; considering the crown of England as the support of every thing that is dear to them, it was not surprising that a recom-

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mendation from the throne upon such a subject, should have been productive of a change of sentiment in the minds of the Protestant gentlemen, and should have induced them to lay aside their apprehensions from a well-founded deference to an authority they were on every account so much bound to respect. Instead of considering the influence that operated upon that occasion discreditable to the Irish House of Commons, he saw in it an additional proof of that good sense, moderation, and political wisdom, by which their proceedings had been generally actuated.—Notwithstanding the insuperable objections which he felt to the admission of the Catholics into the Irish parliament, he was under no fear of being charged with religious bigotry, when it must be recollected that he was the person who had brought forward the bill of 1793. He had done so upon the principle of affording substantial relief to the lower orders of the Catholics, and he conceived that its operation could not endanger the security of the Protestant establishment in church or state, so long as the suffrage of the Catholic could only be exercised in favour of the Protestant gentleman.—Having stated his opinion to be decidedly in favour of a legislative union, he was ready to acknowledge that it did not arise from any impression that it would operate as a cure to the existing disturbances in Ireland. He was afraid that they could be extinguished by vigorous measures alone. He lamented that the country should have been in that state which called for a bill, giving such extraordinary powers as that which had recently passed the Irish parliament; but whilst he lamented it, he was compelled to admit its necessity; and he looked to the firm and energetic execution of the powers it conveyed, as the only means of quelling that rebellious spirit so prevalent in Ireland. Tranquillity once established, the permanency of it would depend, as far as he was capable of understanding the subject, upon the accomplishment of the measure their lordships were then discussing. A legislative union was in his mind the only effectual remedy for the apprehensions and animosities of all parties. So long as Ireland continued in its present state, the people never would be satisfied; and yet while it retained a separate legislature, if it did not retain it on its present footing, there could be no security for the connexion between Great Britain and Ireland. Experiments enough had been tried, palliatives had been applied, a different system had been liberally acted upon and failed. A union was the only resource left, and he was sufficiently sanguine to believe, that if the parliament of Ireland should be brought to acquiesce in the measure their lordships would gradually see that country rise to the highest pitch of prosperity and happiness.

The Earl of *Moira* said, there was no person who would more heartily than himself concur in the measure, were he assured that it was founded in the wishes of the majority of the people of Ireland. But how did the fact stand? Was it not manifest that the opposition to it was not limited to the Irish parliament only, but that it had been treated by the nation at large with an abhorrence amounting almost to a degree of phrenzy? Their objections went not merely to the nature of specific resolutions; they refused to listen to any terms, or to enter on the consideration of any resolutions, however advantageous to their interest, which in the least trenched upon their independence. After this marked reprobation of the proposal, what could be more calculated to add fuel to the flame, than our persevering in it? However anxious he might be to consolidate the connexion between the two countries, he would not advise the adoption of the measure, even could the consent of the Irish House of Commons be obtained, so long as the minds of the people were averse to it; because he well knew that it would be to nourish, in delusive security, a secret fire which would one day not only devour that country, but the whole empire. But, admitting the probability of a change occurring in the dispositions of the Irish people, since the measure was confessedly to lie over until that period arrived, he must contend that it was at least imprudent to pledge the parliament of Great Britain to specific resolutions, which might be superseded by the future relative situation of the countries. Would it be contended, in favour of the present step, that the tenor of the resolutions would alter the sentiments of the Irish nation with regard to the measure which they had in the gross contemplated with such distaste? Observe how judiciously the provisions are calculated to promote such an effect! By one of the resolutions the Test act was to be still maintained in force with respect to the Catholics and Dissenters of Ireland,

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of whom the former constituted three-fourths of the whole population, and the latter nearly two-thirds of all the Protestants. Was it not imprudent to proclaim openly this neglect of their claims, without any thing to counteract its impression, except the fugitive hope held out by the noble secretary of state of a distant admission to the privileges enjoyed by the rest of their countrymen: and thus to establish an inevitable jealousy, if not estrangement, in the breasts of such a majority of that community, whose confidence we professed to court, and whose concurrence it was indispensable to obtain?—The noble secretary of state alleged, that it was necessary to lay the detail of the resolutions before the public, to show that it was not the intention of the government of this country to overreach the sister kingdom. He thought that in that view they would have come with much better grace, before the subject had been agitated in the Irish parliament, than after they had been rejected by so large a portion of that assembly. They must now appear rather as the vindication of the minister than as the spontaneous proffer of England, and at best, as an after-thought tinged with the desire of inculpating the members of the Irish House of Commons who had taken the lead in objecting to the union.—It was stated in support of them, that Ireland could not go on in its present state. He had predicted, that the system of government which had been pursued in that country could not go on, and he had unfortunately proved too true a prophet. That, however, was not a consequence flowing from the constitution of Ireland; it was the result solely of a frantic exercise of severities on the part of government, as much in contempt of that very constitution as in defiance of every principle of policy that had hitherto received currency among men.—But, in describing the connexion at present existing between the two countries, the noble secretary of state had not been very correct when he said that there was no other link of union than the crown. He forgot ties of a much more powerful kind, mixture of blood, the identity of the army and navy of the two islands, and, above all, the reciprocal undiscriminated rights of citizenship enjoyed by the individuals of each kingdom within the other. He forgot that the sole discrimination consisted in their separate parliaments. He was no less unfortunate in his illustration of the inadequacy of the present connexion to bind them permanently together. He had descanted upon the inconveniences which had been experienced under the first constitution of America; to remedy which, they found no other mode than that of creating an executive government for the whole with very extensive powers. This every one must admit to be true; but how did it apply to Great Britain and Ireland, where there already existed such an executive government? The noble secretary had touched on the state of Ireland with regard to the state and economy of establishment of its military force. He had said, that a case might occur in which the parliament of Ireland would refuse to pay the troops, and seemed to think it strengthened very materially his position on this ground of argument, that the test taken by the military of Ireland was different from that taken by the troops of England, and that from this much mischief might at one time or other ensue. If the observation about the test referred only to the militia of Ireland, it was foreign to any conclusion that could be drawn towards the present argument; because that difference applied to troops raised exclusively for local service, and of course organized according to local convenience. If it respected the regular army, the latitude must have been prescribed in the enlisting orders issued from the British war-office; and it would prove nothing but that government was wisely satisfied that a man might be a brave soldier, and a trusty supporter of his country's cause, even though he should believe there were seven sacraments. And he must again remind the noble lord, that there was no such thing as a separate regular Irish army. There was not a regiment in that country which his majesty could not call to England, and replace by another from England, without any explanation to the legislature of Ireland. There was, indeed, a stipulation understood that Ireland should have a certain number of troops stationed there for her defence; and those troops she engages to pay. The noble secretary says, she may refuse to pay them. She may so: and so may the British parliament refuse to pay the army in this island. To argue, however, from power to probability would be the most fallacious of all reasoning; and when that probability was rebutted by all the clearest and most permanent interests that can ac-

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tuate the minds of men, it would be wretched weakness of understanding to allow it a moment's consideration. Still, let it be supposed that such a case could happen, what would be the extreme of inconvenience attending it? That England would have to pay the troops which his majesty has the undoubted prerogative of sending to Ireland and keeping there.

The noble lord expatiates on the benefits which a union will confer on Ireland. Possibly he may be right; but the question whence we are to draw any opinion respecting the expediency of bringing forward these resolutions, is not what the noble lord conceives the Irish ought to think upon the subject, but what the Irish do actually think upon it. Whether justly or not, it appears that they think the demand upon Ireland was nothing less than the whole body of her laws, her rights, her liberties, her independent parliament, the blood, the labour, the wealth and resources of the people. And under what circumstances do the mass of the Irish nation come to weigh such a supposed demand? Disgusted by recent outrages, still smarting from the lash of late severities, and irritated by present threats of continued infliction, how is it to be supposed that they can meet with temper the proposition for drawing closer the ties to which they have been mischievously told were owing all their past sufferings? For one of the most serious evils of the late troubles has been, that they who were trampling the feelings, the properties, and the lives of their fellows under foot, disguised their own passions under the profession, that such violences were necessary for the preservation of English connexion: thereby falsely stating English connexion, which ought to be the source of every blessing to Ireland, as the spring and fountain whence all the calamities of Ireland were flowing. Unjust as the impression was, could the Irishman, until it should be removed, regard the proposal for an union but as a project to render perpetual those oppressions under which he had been groaning? For the question now was, not what ought to be the sentiments of the people of Ireland, but what they are in fact at the moment. If the connexions which an union was to apply to the habits and prejudices of society in Ireland were to be slow, though sure, as was the admission on the part of the secretary of state, how could the great body of the community be expected to put such distant and eventual advantages into the balance against immediate and galling dissatisfactions? They saw the same executive government, or rather the same individuals, in power, professedly destined to be maintained in Ireland. What, then, could they augur but the same course of rule under which they had hitherto groaned? Must they not regard it as if they were to stipulate for the permanence of all the shame and all the sorrow that had wrung their hearts? That they were to promise spontaneous reverence for the lash and the torture, however wantonly employed; to bind themselves to perfect apathy to the cries of an agonized parent, or an insulted wife; and to plight their worship of a system which might at any hour consign unheard to a dungeon, themselves, their children, or their dearest friends? Such sufferings they had all undergone or witnessed: and they had justly ascribed them, not to licentiousness on the part of the troops, but to the principle and procedure of government. The British soldier had not a more ardent friend than he was; nor was there any one who would bear stronger testimony than himself to the humanity, as well as courage of the British army: but excesses and outrages were inseparable from the state of blind suspicion and irritable virulence that always attend civil contention: those evils were to be imputed solely to the man whose counsels had plunged the country into that feverish condition. The Irish government had stigmatized with the name of rebellion that which was originally only indignation at its unconstitutional prosecution of private objects; and, having once made the charge against its opponents, thence deduced the right and the necessity of abandoning the paths of the law, and of making their own conception of expediency the exclusive rule of conduct towards the multitude. This assumed power was not likely to be temperately exercised by those whose keenest passions had been already roused and involved in the contest. The legislature of Ireland had not been asleep. It had already lent its aid in passing every penal statute which the executive government had represented as requisite to meet the dangers of the time; and that new code certainly went, in severity of punishment and in extent of restrictions, beyond what had before been devised in any country. But did the executive government abide by these provisions? No:

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any thing that bore the semblance of law was too tardy for its impatient spirit. Forgetting that the reproof issued by a government ought to be sober as well as dignified and conciliating, as well as rigorous, it even seemed to affect the peevishness of individual animosity: and in that temper it proceeded with eagle swiftness and more than eagle fierceness to pass a sweeping condemnation of the whole people of Ireland. Mercy, justice, and policy, were left lagging far behind, as unprofitable associates. And can you wonder that a nation consigned to such a tomb should revolt at an arrangement which it apprehends will only establish the impracticability of relief? The Irishman must think it nonsense, when he is told that union with England will ensure to him the protection of the laws. He had laws for his protection before, but government contemned them, and England supported the infraction. In the nature of the union, there is not any thing that holds forth to the inhabitant of Ireland a security against the violence of the executive government; but many checks upon that government will be withdrawn; so that additional reason for fear must accrue. This business had been begun at the wrong end. It ought to have been preceded by measures calculated to placate the minds of the Irish nation, and to make them feel practically the benefits of English intervention. Now, he repeated, the prejudice was strong against England. It was unjust; but it was not thence the less operative for the moment. It was the mischief which he had so long foreseen, and which he had so anxiously called upon that House to preclude. He had very long ago asserted, that the tone adopted in the rule of Ireland would not suffer the government to carry with it the affections, confidence, and ready zeal of the people; an evil in itself of sufficient magnitude. Afterwards he warned the House that nothing but conciliatory measures could prevent an estrangement in the minds of the bulk of the Irish nation that must be most injurious to the interests of the empire. He was not believed in either instance. Subsequently, he told them, that unless the system were changed immediately, rebellion in Ireland must be the consequence. He was not believed. There was not any skill in the prophecy: for he had only augured the same result which had invariably sprung from similar oppressions in every age and in every country upon earth. It was the consequence which will follow tyranny as long as man retains his nature. He had urged these considerations to the prudence of this House, when, perhaps, it was yet early enough to have prevented the excess of mischief. Ministers, however, turned a deaf ear to the representation, and appeared to regard matters of fact with more than political apathy, with a gaiety of manner which approached to unconcern. Now the government has at length found that it could not go on without resorting to expedients and means of self-defence, which, whatever was the guilt of one party in the contest, were such as to shock human feeling: and it has thence resorted to the expedient of a union; which, whatever advantages it may possess in other respects, does not at all apply to the immediate evil.

The noble earl (Camden) had alluded to some acts of the legislature of Ireland, being treated with reprobation in that House. He did not know to whom the noble lord alluded. It was very natural to lament some acts that had been passed, but they were still entitled to respect as being the acts of a parliament. What he complained of always in that House was, that the conduct of the executive government in Ireland was no more reconcileable to the acts passed by the Irish parliament than it was to justice or to policy on general principles. He had referred to the modes of indiscriminate and savage torture which had been adopted without compunction, and persevered in without remorse. The pickettings, the burning of houses, the rapes, and the numberless other outrages that had been perpetrated with the view, as it was whimsically said, of crushing disaffection, were surely the most extravagant means that any government ever employed for extinguishing the discontents of a nation. All this had taken place in Ireland during that noble earl's administration. He was, however, far from accusing the noble earl. He was certain those things were not done by his directions or orders; but it was the system; and the noble earl had probably thought himself under the necessity of winking at excesses which he lamented and abhorred, as thinking them unavoidable attendants on a course of rigor which had been represented to him to be indispensable. The noble lord had stated, that the conspiracy existed to an enormous

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extent. He believed it. The report of the secret committees of the parliament of Ireland, and the confessions of those men who were the chiefs in that conspiracy, proved it. According to their confession, the number enrolled to serve in the ranks of the United Irish, was 500,000 men. This number was, perhaps, exaggerated; but still the amount was enormous, and the conspiracy of a most dreadful nature. But that such a conspiracy should have been engaged in by the evident majority of a people, by at least an alarming proportion of the adult and effective population of a country, was the greatest censure that could be passed on any government. How the removal of the parliament from Ireland was to suppress that formidable combination, he knew not. The people had never blamed that parliament for any thing but their becoming the ready instruments of the executive government; and he had always ascribed all the evils, the misfortunes, the many wounds, the wretchedness, and the naked poverty of Ireland, to the misconduct of the British government. He did not, however, mean to say, that the government had acted from any thing but error of judgement, and utter ignorance of the situation of the country, and he chiefly blamed them for not making those inquiries which would inevitably have shown them they proceeded on an entirely wrong principle. This, God knew, was a sufficient source of retrospective sorrow to any feeling mind; and if governments must often hear of the horrors of war, and the pains and sufferings of individuals, without a sigh, and without pity, the time might revolve in the progress of governments as in the lives of individuals, when remorse would take place of apathy, and when ardent prayers would be offered up that the system of their conduct had uniformly enforced on their servants the necessity of respecting with awful veneration the rights of humanity.—The noble lord had stated that the introduction of French principles into Ireland had perverted the minds of individuals too artful not to know how a populace was to be successfully deluded by the loud mimics of patriotism, and the talkers about liberty. He had stated these principles and the effects of them as the cause of the rebellion in Ireland. But these were insufficient to produce a great and universal disaffection. He would repeat it, only conciliatory measures could have saved Ireland. Perhaps they might recover the country. The measures which had been resorted to were evidently improper. He believed no country was ever universally irritated by the adoption of severe measures when those measures were necessary to provide with effect for the general safety. But the case had been different here; those measures which the government asserted were alone calculated to save Ireland, and advance her prosperity, were in themselves repugnant to every notion of moral justice, and it was thence that they were universally execrated by the people. There was something curious in the noble secretary's imagining that those people, whom he called barbarians, described as utterly uncivilized, and treated as incapable of comprehending the meaning of Catholic emancipation or parliamentary reform, were notwithstanding intimately acquainted with all the abstruse discussions that had taken place respecting forms of government, and the principles on which they were established. The inapplicability of such a statement to any thing under present consideration afforded a presumption that the noble lord had some other view in introducing the observation. He feared that the noble lord, when he painted the ignorant peasantry as maintaining the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people, intended it should be inferred, that they who could here talk of the sovereignty of the people must be in purpose as much anarchists as the rebels in Ireland. If so, the noble lord had introduced the term unfitly and invidiously. The misconstruction of that phrase had already done great mischief in this country, by aiding those whose object it was to confound the maintenance of constitutional principles with the support of Jacobinical tenets. That scandalous artifice had been too successfully employed: for democrat was now become, in this country, as savage a war-whoop against any opponent as ever aristocrat had been in France; and if it was not yet so sanguinary, the difference arose from circumstances, not from the spirit of the imputation. He was astonished that nobody had fixed the meaning of the phrase, by appealing to the definition which Aulus Gellius furnished ready prepared to their hand, in the words of Ateius Capito: "In populo, omnes gentes, omnesque ordines civitatis, continentur: plebs vero ea dicitur in qua ordines patriciæ non insunt." The discrimination is as strongly

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marked in the English language, by the distinction between people and populace. When the sovereignty of the people is asserted, it stands simply in denial of the bestial doctrine of divine right. It maintains, that the welfare of the people or nation at large, and not the interest of a single individual, is the object of government. It is nothing more than the declaration of that very parliamentary control under which the noble secretary has told the House, the regal functions must be always exercised in this country. The supremacy of the populace was a notion that never could enter into the conception of any man in his senses. No one had ever advanced, in any time or any country, a proposition so self-evidently absurd, as that the uninformed ought to rule the enlightened part of the community. That no description of men should be debarred from a virtual share in the administration of the general interest, was a principle of unalterable equity as well as of the British constitution. The partial return of members to the House of Commons was defended on no other ground, than that the person elected became the representative not of his electors alone, but of the whole British nation. Whosoever should attempt to vilify this principle, by stating the sovereignty of the people to mean the sovereignty of the mob, would have to find that his most eligible apology would be want of reflexion. On any other ground the misrepresentation would impeach directly the settlement which secured to this country all its blessings, by establishing the present family on the throne of England. The principle involved the suffrage of all that could be wise, virtuous, and respectable in a nation, because it described the whole of that nation; and not, as the noble secretary had inconsiderately alleged, the mere refuse and dregs of society. The physical impossibility of exercising such a right, unless by delegation of power, either hereditarily confided or renewed periodically, refuted all the misapplied declamation about the mischiefs of popular assemblies. The phrase, in fine, specially alluded to the structure of the British constitution. The sovereignty of the people was acknowledged and recognized by parliament, even on every new return of a member to its body; and the writs of general election were a universal, unequivocal, unsophistical recognition of it, according to the principles and imprescriptible usage of the constitution. Extraneous as this discussion had been to the real subject in debate, the point was too important to be left unanswered after the mode in which the noble secretary had treated it. He now returned to the question before the House. In a union, two parties must consent. Ireland has hitherto evinced the strongest repugnance to the proposal. Could a majority in the Irish House of Commons be prevailed upon to change their sentiment, and to vote for the measure, still he would say, that it was doing nothing without the disposition of the great body of the people was conciliated. Nay, he would say, that could it be passed by the parliament against the sense of the nation at large, it would be a dangerous as well as a delusive step. It would only add another class of discontented persons to the mass already hostile to government. To proceed in the business at present, could not tend to placate the Irish, and might give great irritation.

Earl *Camden* said, he felt himself hurt by the harsh words which had been used by the noble earl who spoke last, relating to acts which had taken place during his government in Ireland. The noble earl had mentioned tortures, cruelties, and house-burnings, measures which necessity had compelled the government to adopt. He would not say but such things might have occurred; but he could assure the House that whenever any thing of the kind was made known to the government, it was not only immediately discountenanced, but punished.

Lord *Holland* said, that to him the measure of a union appeared at least but a very doubtful policy. He would not argue that any settlement made in the year 1782, was such as to prevent the House from agreeing to a union between the two kingdoms. He could not consider any adjustment so sacred, that it ought never to be altered. Yet from the manner in which the adjustment of 1782 had been made, and from the manner in which it was received by Ireland, there appeared something extremely ungenerous in this proposition being made by a British legislature. It ought to have come first from Ireland, and in that manner the subject would have been brought with much more propriety before their lordships. The impropriety of proposing a violation of the adjustment of 1782, was peculiarly striking at the present hour, when Ireland

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laboured under so many difficulties; besides ministers were wishing to recall that adjustment at the very moment when the parliament of Ireland had declared its determination to abide by it. The noble secretary said, that it was necessary to show to the people of Ireland, what the terms were upon which this country proposed to unite the two legislators. Such might, very naturally be the desire of ministers; but if they had imprudently involved themselves by bringing forward this question, that was no reason why their lordships should be implicated with them. If ministers had committed an error, why should they seek to compromise parliament. If there was any necessity for showing the people what the intentions of ministers were, a report of the noble secretary's speech would be sufficient for that purpose. This would surely be a better mode of settling the business than the House agreeing to resolutions which were not only in direct opposition to the adjustment of 1782, but to the vote of the Irish parliament. The noble lord had endeavoured to show the necessity of this measure. He had, indeed, succeeded in showing a necessity for something being done, by way of improving the situation of Ireland; but he had not shown that a union was the remedy which was wanted. The example of Scotland had been alluded to; but whether the effects of that union had been good or bad for Scotland, or the empire at large, it was easy to prove that the two cases stood upon very different grounds. At the time of the Scotch union, he could have easily understood the minister of that day had he come forward and said, "Scotland has a separate parliament, which can vote the crown of that country to another sovereign than that of England." This was a situation of affairs that required to be altered; but this was not the case with Ireland, for the parliament of that country possessed no such power. The noble secretary had however at last discovered the source of all the evils that afflicted Ireland. It was nothing less than that country possessed an independent parliament; and that malady the noble lord and his colleagues had shown that none were more capable of curing than themselves. With regard to the union with Scotland, he should farther observe, that that measure was far from tending to promote the tranquillity of the country; on the contrary, the discontents were increased by it, and it afforded a pretext for great numbers joining the pretender; besides, it was forty years after the passing of the union before the commercial prosperity of Scotland began to recover from the shock it had received. It was also a remarkable fact, that five years after it was settled, the very same persons who moved the union, proposed its abolition in that House, and stated as their reasons for that proceeding, that experience had shown that the union had not had those beneficial effects which were expected to flow from it. He believed that every Scotch lord then in the House voted for the motion that was brought forward to abolish the union. The duke of Argyle on that day said, that the union which had been agreed to, in hopes that it would promote the good will and friendship of both countries, had had very different effects, and that the people of England and Scotland had become greater enemies than they were before. Now, this proved how unlikely it was that a union should conciliate the affections of Irishmen towards this country. The advantages which Scotland had received from a union were said to be greater than those which Ireland could obtain; and yet all these advantages had not been sufficient to render it popular. Nothing astonished him more than the apathy with which the proposition for adding a hundred members to the House of Commons was received. This invasion of the constitution was looked to with the most perfect indifference. This proposition was incompatible with the opinions of all those who opposed a parliamentary reform. Some considered the fabric of the constitution as too sacred to be touched at all; others admitted that it might be reformed, but regarded all innovation as dangerous. Those who held these sentiments, certainly could not consent to a union which would be attended with such consequences, and therefore it was impossible that they could, with any consistency, vote for the resolutions, since it was evident that agreeing to them would be, in fact, shutting the door for ever on reform. The Rebellion bill just past by the Irish parliament was said to be necessary for tranquillizing the country. But would it be said, that after a union this necessity would cease? Suppose for a moment that such a measure were proposed in the imperial parliament after the union: the question that would arise would be, whe-

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ther the whole country, or that district of it called Ireland, should be put under martial law. Now what would be the effect upon the minds of the people of Ireland, if with only one-fifth of the members from that country, voting in the legislature, it should be put out of the pale of the constitution?

Lord *Mulgrave* said, that a noble earl had deprecated the discussion of the subject in this country, and had talked of the bad effects it would occasion in Ireland In that opinion he could by no means concur: on the contrary, he conceived that, after the resolutions had undergone a dispassionate discussion, the Irish Houses of parliament might possibly, from knowing what the terms were on which this country was willing to unite with her, be induced to revise the opinion one House there had hastily declared upon the subject. That alone appeared to him a sufficient reason to induce this House to entertain the subject, and proceed to a vote upon it; and the more especially, as it was expressly declared by the secretary of state, that he disclaimed all idea of imposing it on the Irish parliament, either by force or corruption, and meant merely to make it a matter open to their free acceptance when they should be ready and willing to receive it. With regard to its being made a matter of grievance by Ireland, that this country chose to have the outline and ground-work of the proposed union put on the records of the British parliament, could Ireland complain that this country offered to her a free communication of all her commercial advantages? Would she complain that Great Britain was willing to admit Ireland into a full participation of all the means of acquiring wealth, importance, happiness, and prosperity that the people of England and Scotland at this time enjoyed? The noble marquis had said, that the adjustment of 1782 had no connexion with the question of union. From that opinion he differed totally, because he must contend, that out of that very adjustment arose the immediate necessity for the proposed union. The adjustment of 1782 turned upon four questions: two of them British questions, and two Irish. The British questions were, the declaratory law, and the resolution of the House of Commons that soon followed it. The Irish questions were, the removal of the appellant jurisdiction, and the repeal of Poyning's law; and that repeal it was that so considerably loosened the connexion between the two countries, that it became necessary now to come forward with some measure for effectually securing and drawing closer that connexion. It was very remarkable, that Mr. Molyneux, who first called the attention of this kingdom to the complaints and grievances of Ireland, expressly stated that he was against the repeal of Poyning's law, and that so far from thinking the repeal of that law requisite to meet the grievances of Ireland, he thought it the great and binding security to Ireland that this country would continue to assist its weakness by her superior strength and power, and to protect it against danger from without. But noble lords had said if the measure of a union would produce all the advantages that had been described, why had it not been brought forward sooner? The reason was obvious —because the hour had never before arrived, when the weakness of Ireland and her utter incapacity to defend herself had been fairly put to the test. Internal regulations, noble lords might say, belonged only to the consideration and disposal of the legislature of Ireland; but could they say that the Irish parliament was competent to provide for the protection of that kingdom against external danger? It had been manifested that the Irish legislature had no such competency, and Ireland herself had declared, that notwithstanding all that Great Britain had done for her, her situation was still precarious and insecure. What, then, remained but a union, which would at once consolidate the strength of the two kingdoms.

The Earl of *Carlisle* said, he should have given the motion his silent support, had not something fallen from a noble lord (Holland) which might have a mischievous effect in Ireland if no notice were taken of it. That noble lord had reprobated the discussing the topic in that House, and had termed it an ungenerous advantage taken of Ireland, after the opinion that had been passed upon it in Ireland. Nay, he had gone farther, and charged ministers with a design to carry the measure by force. This he was the more surprised at, after their lordships had heard the noble secretary disclaim any such intention. His lordship said he had, a considerable time back, been entrusted with the government of Ireland, and it was during his administration that the adjustment that took place in 1782

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was formed; but when he heard that talked of as "a final adjustment," he really was at a loss to comprehend what was meant by the expression. It was, as he understood it, an adjustment calculated to remove the grievances then felt, and complained of by Ireland; but how two independent countries could make any adjustment to be deemed final and conclusive, and to preclude their power of agreeing at any future period, and under other circumstances, to any farther arrangement, he could not conceive. At the time he was persuaded that the two countries did not intend to bind posterity, and legislate for future generations. From the nature of things the power of being competent to make new arrangements, as events and circumstances might require, must remain; it therefore appeared to him to be absurd to maintain that the adjustment of 1782 was final. But noble lords said, that as one House of the Irish parliament had rejected the proposition for a union, the matter ought to have slept there. Did they think that nothing was due to this country? Did they forget that there were two parties, whose interests were implicated in the measure; Ireland on the one side, and Great Britain on the other? Had the people of this country no right to know in what manner it had been proposed to take care of their interests on the occasion? And he must be allowed to say that something was due also to the minister himself, who had brought forward the measure, as a part of that system which he had pursued for the advantage of the country for some years, and in which he had met with the cordial support of parliament. That gentleman had a fair claim to be heard in his own defence. He trusted the noble marquis would agree with him, that if the union should produce the desirable effect of ameliorating the condition of the Irish peasant, making him feel an interest in his existence, rescuing him from the sullen despair in which he at present held his miserable being, and converting him into the child of hope and expectation, so as to put him on a footing with every description of British subjects, it would be a measure the most politically useful, that human invention could have devised.

The Earl of *Westmorland* said, he lamented that several of his most valuable friends, on the other side the water, differed from him in opinion respecting the measure. The decision of the House of Commons of Ireland, who refused even to hear what the terms of the proposed union were, was certainly rashly and prematurely formed, because it did not become reasonable men, legislatively assembled, to prejudge a great national measure, before they even knew upon what grounds that measure rested. He had reason to believe, that already some of the most violent against hearing a proposition that related to a union stated to them, had begun to think it was not very wise to decide so irrationally. The noble marquis had treated the parliament of Ireland with a severity, which he could not suffer to pass unnoticed. That parliament did not deserve the sort of animadversion which the noble marquis had bestowed upon it so lavishly. Parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation were used merely as watch-words, and words of hue-and-cry, by those who meditated the subversion of the constitution of Ireland, and its disunion from Great Britain. Catholic emancipation, unaccompanied with parliamentary reform, every man who knew any thing of the subject must know, would not only be an ineffectual, but a dangerous measure; but neither the one nor the other was in the contemplation of those, who were most clamorous for both; and in this opinion he was supported by the authority of Mr. Arthur O'Connor, and the rebels and traitors now in confinement. The petitions from the Catholics were not treated in the harsh manner stated by the noble marquis, nor did the parliament of Ireland ever lend a deaf ear to what they alleged to be their grievances; on the contrary, they were always ready to listen to the language of complaint, and, if possible, to administer an adequate remedy; but in the instance respecting Catholic emancipation, the question was, whether the Protestant ascendancy should or should not be upheld? The moment it was over-balanced in the scale, the existence of the government would necessarily be endangered. With regard to the arrangement of 1782, he was astonished to hear it said that it was final. He presumed, that no noble lord who made a part of the administration of that day, would declare he considered it as final. What they did could only be considered as preliminaries to some future proceeding: they repealed the act of George 1st, and thereby repealed Poyning's law, and they restored the appellant

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jurisdiction to the Irish House of Lords. The cords of connexion thus cut asunder, would any noble lord, a member of that ministry, venture to assert, that they meant to leave the affair in that loose and unsettled state? He appealed to the noble marquis, whether farther measures were not in contemplation to cement the two kingdoms in their relative friendship and interests. He called upon the noble marquis to declare, whether an idea was not entertained of sending over commissioners to this kingdom, to superintend the interests of Ireland? He had reason to believe, that that idea was not only suggested, but even proceeded on to a certain extent. Sure he was, that the arrangement left the two kingdoms in a state so very little short of absolute disconnexion, that there was an absolute necessity of some farther arrangement to draw the connexion closer, and combine their strength; and after the maturest reflexion, he was convinced that removing the seat of legislation from Dublin, and creating an imperial parliament to be held here, while it gave industry, commerce, prosperity, and wealth to Ireland, would essentially benefit the general interests of the empire.

The Marquis of *Lansdown* said, that, called upon as he was by the noble earl, he could only reply, as he had done before, that in 1782 the adjustment was considered to be conclusive as to the question of the independence of the Irish parliament; and after the address to his majesty was carried to the throne, requesting his majesty to desire the parliament of Ireland to state their grievances; and the message of the king to that effect was delivered to the Irish parliament, and proceeded on by their address, it was considered as a completion of the remedy then necessary. Certainly, once it had been in contemplation to appoint commissioners to superintend the interests of Ireland in this country, but that was in an early stage of the business, and the noble duke, at that time lord lieutenant of Ireland, after the parliament of Great Britain had satisfied the sister kingdom upon every material ground of complaint, wrote over word that he thought the measure of appointing commissioners no longer necessary.

The Duke of *Portland* said, that having the honour to hold the government of Ireland in 1782, he had no scruple to declare, that his wish was, to meet the grievances of that country, at the time complained of, with an adequate remedy, and that he certainly considered the measures then adopted as amounting to such remedy; but he neither at that time, nor at this, imagined, that the adjustment was to preclude any farther arrangement between the two countries, that different circumstances might require; much less that it was to be relied on as an unanswerable argument against the proposed union, which he thought to be, of all others, the measure best adapted to benefit Ireland, and to promote the general interests of the empire.

The previous question being put, "Whether the said question shall be now put," it was resolved in the affirmative. The Resolutions were then read and agreed to, and their lordships were summoned for the 4th of April.

Debate in the Lords on the Address relative to a Union with Ireland.] April 11. The order of the day being read,

Lord *Grenville* said, that after the very able and full manner in which the subject of that evening's debate had been already discussed, it would be quite unnecessary for him to take up one moment of their lordships time. He should therefore content himself simply with moving the following Address:

"We, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Lords spiritual and temporal, and in parliament assembled, humbly beg leave to assure your majesty, that we have proceeded with the utmost attention to the consideration of the important objects recommended to us in your majesty's message, respecting the connexion between this country and Ireland.

"We entertain a firm persuasion that a complete and entire Union between Great Britain and Ireland, founded on equal and liberal principles, on the similarity of laws, constitution, and government, and on a sense of mutual interests and affections, by promoting the security, wealth, and commerce, of the respective kingdoms and by allaying the distractions which have unhappily prevailed in Ireland, must afford fresh means of opposing at all times an effectual resistance to the destructive projects of our foreign and domestic enemies, and must tend to confirm and augment the stability, power, and resources of the empire.

"Impressed with these considerations we feel it our duty humbly to lay before

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your majesty such propositions as appear to us best calculated to form the basis of such a settlement, leaving it to your majesty's wisdom, at such time and in such manner, as your majesty, in your parental solicitude for the happiness of your people shall judge fit, to communicate these propositions to your parliament of Ireland, with whom we shall be at all times ready to concur in all such measures as maybe found most conducive to the acccomplishment of this great and salutary work. And we trust that, after full and mature consideration, such a settlement may be framed and established by the deliberative consent of the parliaments of both kingdoms, as may be conformable to the sentiments, wishes, and real interests of your majesty's faithful subjects of Great Britain and Ireland, and may unite them inseparably in the full enjoyment of the blessings of our free and invaluable constitution, in the support of the honour and dignity of your majesty's crown, and in the preservation and advancement of the welfare and prosperity of the whole British empire."

Lord *Auckland*, said:—My lords; I rise with earnestness, and with peculiar satisfaction, to give my support to an address to the revered sovereign of the two kingdoms, for the purpose of communicating our Resolutions to the Lords and Commons of Ireland. This measure will hold out to the Irish nation a most solemn pledge of the liberality, affection, and wisdom, of the British parliament; and will explicitly record the motives and principles by which we are guided in our endeavour to consolidate the legislatures and unite the interests of Great Britain and of Ireland. I feel no regret, my lords, that I have waited in silence to the close of our proceeding. I willingly reposed myself on the superior abilities of others, for the discussion and explanation of the leading and general topics. It may still however, be possible to throw new lights upon a question which involves the future government and well-being of the greatest empire now existing. Such a subject is inexhaustible. The portion of it which I now propose to offer to your attention, is dry and of much detail. I undertake it only from a sense of duty, and it is an encouragement to me to think that our debates are contributing to the removal of many ill-founded notions and misrepresentations, which were prevalent in the sister kingdom. Few indeed are those who now deny the necessity of some great change being made in the system of Irish government; and I do not believe that any noble lord will maintain, as an unqualified proposition, that the union of the two kingdoms, accomplished on grounds satisfactory to each, would not promote the tranquillity, civilization, and prosperity, of Ireland, and eventually the strength and security of Great Britain, and of the British empire. I assume accordingly, that a union is desirable, if it can be reconciled to the opinions and goodwill of both the contracting parties.

The time was, my lords, when the objections would have originated in this kingdom; and we cannot wonder that our ancestors seemed* to wish to avoid a measure, the immediate and most obvious benefits of which were always in favour of Ireland. It is now, however, well understood, that national wealth may be shared and extended without lessening the prosperity of the country which gives the participation; and the good sense and enlightened liberality of our countrymen would at present induce them to rely cheerfully and confidently on their parliament, both for the expediency of a union, and for the adjustment of the conditions. But the consent and co-operation of Ireland are still wanting. Ireland, my lords, must

* The Report made in the Irish House of Commons in 1703, by the committee on the state of the nation, concluded with a resolution, that her majesty be moved, "that through her favourable interposition her subjects of this kingdom may be relieved from the calamities they now lie under, by a full enjoyment of their constitution, or by a more firm union with England." This representation was voted by the House. The address of the Irish House of Lords, 1st October, 1703, concluded thus, "As we are sensible that our preservation is owing to our being united to the crown of England, so we are convinced it would tend to our further security and happiness, to have a more comprehensive and entire union with that kingdom." The answers returned were in general terms, and not encouraging. On the 4th March, 1704, the Speaker in presenting the bills, referred pointedly to the representation above-mentioned, as having had the unanimous voice and consent of a full House, and prayed the lord lieutenant's support to carry it into execution. On the 9th July 1707, the Irish Commons in their address to the queen, entreated her "to add greater lustre and strength to the crown, by a yet more comprehensive union." The address of the Irish House of Lords on the 15th of July, 1707, was expressed in terms still stronger in favour of a union.

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form her own decision; she must decide for herself, through the medium of the deliberate wisdom of her parliament. I am aware, that the proposition at its first opening, has not had the apparent assent of the Irish House of Commons. A small majority of the members who were present declined the consideration of the measure, and some individuals refused even to know what it was. I will not attribute such a conduct to interested views, to false alarms to fabricated clamour, to unthinking precipitancy, or to a false punctilio and a mistaken sense of national pride. I wish to avoid, and I disclaim, every sentiment and every expression that may be harsh or invidious: but I must be permitted to say and I say it with satisfaction, that I know enough of the theatre of action, and of the principal actors upon that theatre, to do them the justice to believe, that their resistance will give way to the commanding voice of reason and of truth. Let it be shown by our dispassionate deliberations, that the union of the two countries will be attended with many benefits to Ireland; let it be recorded that we are disposed to confer those benefits to the utmost extent compatible with our own essential interests. Let this be done:—the calm hour of reflection will convince Ireland that the objections so hastily urged on her part are unsound and fallacious.

I do not think it necessary, my lords, to attempt the examination of those objections. They have been amply confuted both in this country and in Ireland. The unconstitutional doctrine which denies the competency of parliament to effect a union, and to operate what (by an inference falsely conceived and idly expressed) is called "its own extinction," was exploded even in the beginning of this century. It has been revived in the schools of modern democracy by the admirers of the sovereignty of the people, and accordingly has the strongest claims to contempt and rejection. I propose, however, before I proceed to the commercial considerations, to examine the nature of that independence, which, as some advisers of the people of Dublin assert, will be subverted and destroyed by the consolidation of the two legislatures. I think it important to ascertain the value of what Ireland is told she will lose, before I proceed to appreciate what it is that she will gain. I recognize that independence of the Irish legislature, abstractedly considered, as secured by the arrangement of 1782; but however perfect the independence may be in principle, it must at all times and in the nature of things be mutilated, and most imperfect in practice. We cannot shut our eyes against the truths presented by the map of Europe, and by the notoriety of the relative situation, size, and population, of the two islands.

What, then, in point of fact, is the independence of a country which has no means of defence, or security, or self-preservation, but through the aid and protection of its more powerful neighbour? If two countries so circumstanced take adverse lines of conduct, a struggle must ensue, and either the weaker of the two must be over-ruled, or confusion, and all the evils of war must follow. If, on the other hand, there should prevail between the two a uniform system and uniform principles of conduct, in leading points of common concern, the weaker must be presumed to have thus far sacrificed, virtually and habitually, its exercise of independent power. Let us, my lords, apply this dilemma to the known and principal objects of national independence! Has Ireland, or can she have, the power of negociating, controlling, or even of rejecting treaties, notwithstanding that those treaties may involve the most essential interest of the British empire, of which she forms a part? Has she the means of protecting her own commerce, or of establishing colonies, or of making and holding conquests? Has she any property, or direct concern in the acquisitions made by the fleets and armies of the sovereign? Has she, or can she have, any naval force? And is not the direction of her military force necessarily conformable to the opinion of British ministers responsible only to the British parliament? Has she, in short, or can she have, any control whatever, or any interference, or even any concern, otherwise than in a visionary and abstract claim, respecting the imperial transactions of peace and war, alliances, and confederacies? Has she, even in the exercise of legislation, any access to the royal sanction, otherwise than through British ministers not amenable to her parliament, and under the great seal of the British chancellor?

But I wave all these considerations; though they ought to be strong inducements to Ireland not merely to accede to the proposed union, but to seek and solicit it. I wave them all, and will suppose

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Ireland to have every advantage possessed by Great Britain, and in an equal degree. I will suppose the two islands to be similar, in size and population; in wealth, cultivation, and commerce; in conquests and in colonies; and to be placed upon the globe within a few leagues of each other. Still, however, with one executive power; and with separate and independent legislatures. Will any individual of sound mind assert, that the entire union of two countries such as I have described would be degrading or detrimental to either? And by what line of reasoning shall a different inference be drawn when the two countries thus nearly adjoining, happen to be utterly unequal in size and in force? I contend that the inferior of the two, so situated, never can retain its connexion, and at the same time possess either real independence or an uncontrolled and safe prosperity, otherwise than by uniting with its more powerful neighbour; and that its wish for union ought to increase in proportion to its inferiority in force. I might rest this assertion on the experience of Ireland herself. For it is not true that whilst Great Britain has gradually advanced in civilization of manners, and in every art, science, and improvement, which can give happiness, honour, and security, to nations and to individuals; Ireland possessing the same climate, a fruitful soil, and excellent ports, and a numerous people, to whom the Common Parent of all gave great acuteness and ingenuity, has nevertheless been at all times involved in comparative disorder, poverty, turbulence, and wretchedness? I might add, without exaggeration, that in the 600 years since the reign of Henry 2nd there has been more unhappiness in Ireland, than in any other civilized nation, not actually under the visitation of pestilence, or of internal war. And all these evils may be traced to the disjointed and jarring action of two unequal powers, closely adjacent to each other, possessing the same interests, and subject to the same crown, but with separate legislatures.

But why should I confine myself to times in which a persecuting policy was avowedly exercised against Ireland, upon principles of commercial jealousy? Let us now look to a period within the memory of most of us; the period immediately previous to the attainment of what Ireland was pleased to call a free trade and a free constitution. Many of your lordships were members of this House, whilst the British parliament still continued to assert and to exercise the claim to make laws for Ireland, as "being subject to the imperial crown of Great Britain." Ireland at that time held the functions of legislation more in ceremony than in substance. Her laws originated in the privy councils of the two kingdoms, and were prepared and approved by the English attorney general. And even when a law had passed through the Irish parliament, it was still liable to be corrected, changed, or suppressed by the British cabinet. Ireland was then also as subordinate in judicature as in legislation. We made her laws, and we interpreted them. Appeals from the decisions of her judges were to the courts of Westminster and to this House. It may also be recollected, that at the time to which I refer, the hereditary revenue of Ireland was almost sufficient for the support of government; and the Irish army was established under the British Mutiny bill; and afterwards under a Mutiny bill passed in Ireland, but made perpetual. I was not sorry that such a system should cease. It certainly did not allow to Ireland more than the name of the British constitution, or more than the semblance and mockery of a free government. But, my lords, I was not so short-sighted as to persuade myself that, because the Irish freedom, as it was called, took place, Irish prosperity would be the consequence, unless much more could be done. The law of Poyning, degrading and galling as it might be, nevertheless united the laws and constitution of the two kingdoms; and the appellant jurisdiction of this House, justly and greatly respected by the Irish themselves, assimilated their jurisprudence to ours. When those links of connexion were broken, it was evident that Ireland must soon suffer disadvantages much greater than those which had so long depressed her. Neither prosperity nor tranquillity, nor safety were to be expected from a government founded in the pretensions of a small part of the community to monopolize the representation, patronage, and resources of the whole. The insufficiency of such a system had been felt and lamented for a century, even whilst it was controlled, directed, and supported, by the Protestant parliament of this Protestant kingdom. Now that it was ceasing to be connected with that parliament, it became more than ever unsatisfactory to the bulk of the Irish nation, and utterly incompetent and unsafe with

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respect to the general interests of the British empire.

And here, my lords, it may add some little weight to my reasonings, if I may be permitted to explain that I have at all times endeavoured to promote the commercial prosperity and constitutional freedom of Ireland; and that what I am now going to state is the result, not of new motives, but of long meditation, and of opinions repeatedly avowed. In doing this, I must necessarily make a short reference to past transactions. So early as in 1779, I stated and published* the expediency of that enlarged system of commerce which was then demanded by Ireland, and which was granted by us a few months afterwards. In 1780, I went to Ireland as chief secretary in a vice royalty, which at its close (in 1782) received from the Irish parliament, strong assurances of national gratitude and respect. In the session of 1781, I was specially named, with the recorder of Dublin, to be of the committee for the bill which extended to Ireland the writ of Habeas Corpus by an Irish law. In the same session, I promoted the bill for making the Irish judges independent. I then, also framed the whole institution of the bank of Ireland, and introduced the act which established it. In 1782, I was the first to propose, in the British parliament, the repeal of the statute, 6 Geo. 1, which asserted the right to bind Ireland by British laws. When I made the proposition it was treated, by some persons who now hear me, as violent and precipitate, and as dictated by a party animosity and peevishness, which in truth I never felt. That incident is become matter of history; and I may now say, without scruple, that my conduct was governed by what I conceived to be a just sense of ministerial and personal engagements. The repeal of our declaratory state had long been thought desirable by the government and vice-royalty under which I was serving, and my endeavour to procure that repeal had been the only stipulation made with me, by some leading persons, as the honourable price of their support. I allude to individuals who now hold very high situations in Ireland, and with whom I have ever since lived in full confidence and cordial friendship. It is, my lords, in most cases, objectionable, to refer to the printed statements of parliamentary debates; but I solicit your lordships' attention to the sentiments attributed to me in January 1783. A noble viscount, then in the House of Commons, proposed a bill "for removing all doubts concerning the exclusive rights in the parliament and courts of Ireland in matters of legislation and judicature." "Mr. Eden* avowed his opinion, that it was for the interest of an empire that a supremacy of legislation, over all its constituent parts, should reside within the metropolis of the empire. He reminded Mr. Fox, that he (Mr. Eden) had consented to the abolition of the appellant jurisdiction, and to the alteration of Poyning's law, in the confidence only of measures being taken, pursuant to the resolutions and address, to establish the connexion of the two kingdoms on a firm and permanent basis. He had relied on a treaty being opened, between the two parliaments for the purposes of arranging not only commercial points, but all the great questions involved in the future events of peace and war, foreign alliances, commercial treaties, limitation of armies, building and support of navies, proportionable supplies, with the whole immense detail under each of those heads. He should then, and not till then, think that the connexion was established. And when the two kingdoms had thus realized one constitution, one commerce, one king, one enemy, and one fate, it would become impossible for any man to wish the prosperity of the one country more ardently and more earnestly than the prosperity of the other."

My lords, the import of those expressions certainly went to the full extent of union. I may appeal to what passed, two years afterwards, on the occasion of the Irish propositions. It happened to me to take a considerable share in the debates of that session, and to insist that one of two lines, respecting our commerce with Ireland, was proper to be adopted—either, that arrangements between the two countries should be settled by negotiation and treaty, as between two independent nations, giving equivalents for advantages interchanged; or that a union of commerce, policy, and legislation, should take place. Many respectable and most intelligent manufacturers concurred in those opinions, which were strongly urged in their addresses to parliament:—"We are

* Mr. Heden's fourth Letter to the earl of Carlisle.

* See vol. 23, p. 31.

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fully convinced," said the Manchester Petition, "that no system but what prescribes a participation of burthens as well as of advantages can be fair, equitable, or permanent; and, therefore, that a complete union is the best means of establishing harmony and good will between the two nations." The general chamber of British manufacturers, published on the 18th May 1785, some objections to the amended Irish resolutions: when, after stating the expediency of "becoming one people under one parliament," they added, that, "a real union with Ireland, under one legislature, would take away every difficulty." These suggestions were the result of plain sense, and strongly applicable to the questions then under discussion. I think them equally applicable to the actual predicament of the two countries.

It became a general opinion that uniformity of law must accompany the communication of permanent advantages; and those who had introduced the commercial propositions, admitted the doctrine, with the wisdom and liberality which has so long distinguished their conduct. The fourth article was accordingly introduced as an amendment, expressly stating, that "the laws for trade and navigation should be the same in Great Britain and in Ireland." The Irish parliament in 1780, on being admitted to a direct trade with our colonies had already recognized the same principle, and still act under it; but in 1785, such a condition was not reconcileable to the new notions of liberty. The present Speaker of Ireland combated those new notions with much eloquence, ingenuity, and force. Some of Mr. Grattan's expressions on that occasion deserve to be recollected. He opposed the propositions;—"We are told" said he, "that the laws respecting commerce and navigation should be similar; and it is inferred, that Ireland should subscribe the laws of England on those subjects."—"It is a union, an incipient and a creeping union; a virtual union, establishing one will in the general concerns of commerce and navigation, and reposing that will in the parliament of Great Britain; a union, where our parliament preserves its existence after it has lost its authority."—"I consider myself as opposing a union *in limine*, and that argument for union which makes similarity of law and community of interest a pretence for extinction of constitution."—In this instance I can agree with Mr. Grattan. A commercial system so settled would certainly imply an equality of commerce purchased by an inequality of constitution. Similarity of law in the two countries can only be secured, either by virtual union, in which the legislature of the one country must be understood to control and supersede the legislature of the other; or by the incorporating union and blending of the two legislatures, so as to place on an equal basis the liberties of both countries. And yet this similarity of law is indispensable in communicating to Ireland a full and permanent commerce, which alone can give to her people, employment, capital, opulence, and industry.

Such, my lords, were the impressions and reasonings which determined me to call for the accounts now under our view. And having fully considered them, I venture to assert, that the commercial interests exhibited and proved in these papers will have more effect, than any other consideration, in finally accomplishing the union of the two kingdoms. It would, my lords, be grating to the feelings of us all, to state to Ireland, that she is chained down, though by her own prejudices, to a weak and inefficient independence, subject to incessant collisions, and inseparable from misfortune and humiliation. I should think it ungenerous to make such a statement, if it were not in my power to present to her at the same time a real and permanent independence, accompanied by a full participation of British opulence, British greatness, and British freedom, with its best companion, British security. A nation with plain and undisguised truths of this magnitude before her eyes, cannot long be influenced by misrepresentations, or by the partial interests of a few, who may struggle to retain an ascendancy incompetent and irreconcileable to the happiness of the whole. I shall not advert more particularly to the Irish metropolis, though it would be easy to show that Dublin will be greatly advanced in employment, population, rents, and wealth, by the effect of the proposed measure. The produce of the income tax will ascertain, that the opulence of our own metropolis depends in a small proportion on the occasional residence of the members of the legislature; that opulence is chiefly derived from the activity and energy of our commercial credit and capitals, which can never be communicated to the sister kingdom otherwise than by a legislative

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union. But I wish to speak of Ireland in general. The interests of her merchants and manufacturers, and of the owners and occupiers of land, will best be understood by a short analysis of the printed accounts to which I now solicit your lordships' particular attention.

It is impossible, my lords, to contemplate these papers without exultation of mind, at so brilliant an exhibition of the increasing prosperity of Great Britain, and of her unexampled pre-eminence among nations. We see her, mistress of the trade of the world, and possessing a navy amply adequate to the protection of such a trade. We saw without surprise the late avowal of our enemy, that she has not one merchant vessel upon the sea. These papers will give to your lordships, what has never before been attempted, the true valuation of our whole commerce according to current prices and to other documents, the accuracy of which is incontestable. It has been a task of great labour and difficulty, and could not have been completed but by the intelligent exertions and well-tried accuracy and ability of the present inspector-general. It appears, accordingly, that the total value of our imports and exports in the year 1798 was ninety-five millions sterling;—above twenty-two millions higher than the average value of the four last years of peace. The true value of the imports amounting to 46,963,000*l*; the exports to above 48 millions. The British manufactures exported in 1798, amounted to 33,600,000*l*. being 6,477,000*l*. higher than the average export of our manufactures in the four last years of peace. The annual average import into Great Britain from Ireland, during the last four years of peace, was about 4,900,000*l*.; and for the three years ending the 5th Jan. 1799, it was above 5,500,000*l*., being an increase of about 600,000*l*. Upon our entire trade with Ireland, the annual balance in her favour is above two millions; and upon the interchange of the products and manufactures of the two countries, the balance in favour of Ireland is above 3,400,000*l*.

And here, my lords, allow me to specify the principal articles of our commerce with Ireland, and to examine the causes which give to her, apparent advantages of great extent, and at the same time, under her present circumstances, of little avail. Two-fifths of the average exports from Great Britain to Ireland, for the last three years, consisted of East Indian, colonial, and foreign articles. We sent them to the amount of 1,468,000*l*.: we gave an entire drawback of the duties; and the revenue annually received by Ireland on this branch of our trade was about 345,000*l*. British money. The remaining three-fifths of the British exports to Ireland may be classed under the heads of British manufactures and products. The total average value of the manufactures exported to Ireland, when distinguished from what comes under the description of products, was 1,640,000*l*., being about one-twentieth of our whole export of manufactures. The principal article is that of woollens, in value 686,000*l*., about one-twelfth of our woollens exported. The other articles separately taken are of small amount, and consist of cottons, cotton-yarn, wrought-iron, leather, glass, earthen-ware, &c. The articles of British products exported to Ireland are essential to the Irish manufactures, such as oak-bark, coals, bar-iron, hops, lead, and salt. The most important article is that of coals. We annually send to Ireland above 300,000 chaldrons, subject to a duty of only 1*s*. 2*d*. per chaldron; at the same time that our coasting trade pays 5*s*. 9*d*.; and that the duties paid in the metropolis of England amount to 9*s*. 3*d*. A revenue of 600,000*l*. is raised in this kingdom on coals; Ireland, however, pays no more than 17,900*l*. for the duties on all that we supply to her; and an Irish duty is levied in Dublin of 1*s* 9*d*. per ton. with the exemption only of such coals as may be used to promote against us the rival manufactures of glass and refined sugar. Other products, such as allum, bark, bar-iron, hops, lead, and salt, are subject to similar remarks; they go free from this country, and pay considerable duties in Ireland. The average revenue raised in Ireland on British products and manufactures is 194,000*l*. The revenue raised in Great Britain on Irish products and manufactures is 10,850*l*.

I shall now, my lords, proceed to examine how far the same liberal system prevails respecting the exports from Ireland to Great Britain, and to the British settlements. I admit, that on some articles of manufacture our protecting duties are nearly prohibitory. But I venture to assert, that the entire abolition of all those duties would, in the present relative circumstances of Ireland, have no effect whatever. If, indeed, the two kingdoms were blended in their legislatures, and interests,

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so as to establish, between the opposite sides of St. George's Channel, the same sort of connexion, interest, and intercourse, which now subsists between the opposite banks of the Humber or the Thames, I willingly believe, that the gradual extension of English capital and the gradual interchange of workmen, would transfer to Ireland a full participation not only in the woollen and cotton manufactures, but in many other branches of employment. The credit and capital, which are now pent up within Great Britain, would then descend like water to a level, and diffuse themselves equally over both kingdoms. There is nothing in such an operation, when maturely arranged and prepared, which ought not to satisfy those, on the one hand, who dread the removal of their wealth to a country where taxes are comparatively low; or those, on the other hand, who affect to dread an increased taxation. The virtual and gradual equalizing of burdens, as well as of benefits, is implied in all these statements, and would be accomplished by a united, wise, and provident legislature, without any shock to the interests of either contracting party. In the mean time, it cannot have escaped your lordships' observation, that the duties alluded to are on articles which we are exporting in considerable quantities to Ireland, such as woollens, cottons, and leather manufactured. Let it also be remarked, that our woollens are subject in Ireland, on a fair average value of the whole export, to about five and a half per cent *ad valorem;* and yet the Irish market takes our woollens to the amount of 686,000*l.* a year. Our cotton goods pay a duty in the Irish ports of 9*l.* 18*s.* 5*d.* per cent *ad valorem;* and yet the value of our cottons imported into Ireland is about 70,000*l.* a year. But the instance of leather manufactured and tanned is still more remarkable. We bring the chief raw materials from Ireland, charged there with an export duty, and we prepare it and send it back to Ireland, to the annual amount of 152,000*l.* It is subject to an import duty, paid there, of nearly 10 per cent *ad valorem.* We are, nevertheless, able to enter into competition with Ireland even in her own market, though she possesses the raw material, and though we supply her with tanner's bark free of all duty.

I will not detain your lordships farther in the discussion of articles which, it is evident, would not be sent to us even if all the duties were removed. I think it sufficient to have shown, that the existence of those duties is in effect no exception to the liberality of our general system. There are, however, some products and manufactures which Ireland is able to supply to a considerable extent. The cattle and provisions, furnished annually by Ireland to Great Britain, amount to no less a sum than two millions sterling annually. A duty too, producing about 30,000*l.*, is charged in Ireland on that whole export: and yet we prohibit, in time of peace, the admission of provisions from other countries, and do not even permit the United States of America to send provisions to our islands and fisheries. I do not wish, at present, to examine the policy of these exclusive encouragements, nor whether it may be a detriment to our own agriculture to import Irish provisions duty free. The quantity purchased by us is apparently large, and such as at first sight might seem difficult to be replaced, if ever the channel of supply should be suddenly checked. But when it is considered in the scale of our general consumption, its importance is much diminished. I find, for instance, that all the beef which we take from Ireland, including what is furnished for our fleets, is less than one third of what is annually sold in Smithfield. The only other article of Irish products, imported by us to any considerable amount, is that of oats, which may be stated at 200,000*l.* sterling.

I now come to the exported manufactures of Ireland, which are nearly comprised in the single article of linen. I am content to take the valuation as it is given in the papers before us (1*s.* 5*d.* per yard), though I believe it to be below the true average price. It appears then, by the accounts on your table, that, in the last three years, the annual import of Irish linens (being thirty-seven millions of yards) amounted to 2,600,000*l.*; to which may be added linen-yarn, the valuation of which was 243,000*l.* In the accounts of the Irish Custom-house, the annual export of Irish linens to all the world, is stated at about forty millions of yards, and seven-eighths of the whole, or thirty-five millions, are taken by Great Britain and her colonies.—Such is the quantity and proportion imported for British consumption, free of duty, and under favour of a protecting duty equal to 25 per cent imposed on the linen of all other countries! and whatever part of that quantity is not

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consumed in England, is exported to other countries by the aid of British credit and of a British bounty. How far this system may be beneficial to England; whether the duties on linens from the continent, with a total exemption in favour of Ireland, have tended to increase the restraints in foreign countries upon our manufactures; and whether, if the Russian and German linens were less discouraged by us, a larger demand for our woollens and cottons would not take place in return; are questions of great moment, which I am not now solicitous to discuss. The beneficial effects of such a system, with respect to Ireland at least, are not equivocal, and may be traced in the printed Report of the late Board of Trade in 1780. It appears, in that Report, that the linen manufactures of Ireland have been gradually raised to their present flourishing state, and are still rising in prosperity, solely by the operation and effect of British care and encouragement. The import into Great Britain in 1743, when the present system commenced, was 6,418,000 yards; in 1773, it was 17,876,000 yards; in 1783, 21,000,000 yards; and in 1798, 37,000,000 yards. The export, with bounty, in 1743, was 40,900 yards; in 1773, 2,832,000 yards; and in 1798, 6,400,000 yards. The foreign linens, in 1743, were three-fourths of our whole import; at present, they are only one-fourth.

But here, my lords, I think it just and necessary to remark, that by our actual system we are subjecting ourselves to one or two disadvantages; either to an increase of price equal to about 25 per cent on the value, which falls on the consumer: or, to a proportionate loss of revenue—and that the amount (being 25 per cent on 2,600,000*l.*) is, in either case, 650,000*l.* For a moment's reflexion will show, that if the foreign linens, charged as they are with a duty of 25 per cent, can come into competition with the Irish, which are duty free, those same foreign manufactures would soon be able to supply all our demand, and might be consumed at 25 per cent below the present price, if they were relieved from duty as the Irish are. On the other hand, the Irish linens, if subjected to the foreign duties, must either be furnished by Ireland at 25 per cent below their present price, or be driven out of the market. In this latter case, too, an addition of 650,000*l.* would be made to our revenue; unless, indeed, the encouragement which such a change might give to our home-made linens should occasion a decrease in the general import.

Such are the effects of our liberality towards Ireland in this important manufacture, which constitutes in value nearly one-half of the Irish exports to all the world. And there now lies on that table a bill, which we are passing, to continue our bounties on Irish linens. And yet, a few weeks ago, the following phrases were gravely addressed, by an eminent person (Mr. Foster) to the county of Louth:—"In truth, I see much danger, and a probable decrease of our trade and manufactures, from the measure of a legislative union, and I cannot conceive any advantage to them from it. If the linen manufacture rests at all on any compact, that compact was made with the Irish parliament; the extinction of which takes away a security we had found adequate, and leaves it without the protection of its natural guardians, who, by *their* vigilance, *their* regulations, and *their* bounties, have more than doubled its exports within a few years. As an Irishman, then, I should oppose the measure."—I know nothing of the compact here alluded to; and I am unable to annex any sense to the word "extinction," as applied to the projected union of the two legislatures. But I perfectly understand, and, know, that the annual importation of Irish linens, to the amount of nearly three millions sterling, is a sort of monopoly given to Ireland in the British market; and that the existence and continuance of that monopoly do not depend on the vigilance, regulations, and bounties, of the Irish parliament, but on *our* liberality, *our* regulations, and *our* bounties, and are entirely subject to the gratuitous favour, good will, and dispensations, of the British parliament. It will also be obvious, to the most superficial observer, that if Ireland has obtained and enjoyed these advantages, through the indulgence of the British separate legislature, in despite of any spirit of rivalship or jealousy, she will be more likely to increase than to forfeit them, when she shall be incorporated as a part of the same kingdom, and when Irish representatives shall form a proportion of the united parliament.—In addition to the indulgences which I have described, we have given to Ireland many privileges for the encouragement of her fisheries. We have also relaxed the whole system of our navigation laws, and permit the produce

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of our colonies to be imported to us through the Irish ports. I do not lay much stress on the probable benefits of these concessions. They were, indeed, solicited as of great importance; but Ireland, nevertheless, continues to be supplied, through Great Britain, not only with fish, to the amount of 113,000*l.* annually; she also receives rum, sugars, indigo, and tobacco, circuitously (and with all the expense of landing, warehousing, re-shipping, commission, &c.), to the annual amount of more than 500,000*l.* at the same time that her direct importation of these articles is valued at not more than 140,000*l.* a year. Nor will she ever be able to avail herself of our concessions, without the aid of British capital and confidence, which can only be obtained by union. Hitherto there hardly exists an instance of any considerable British house engaged in Ireland in Irish partnership.

The general results are, that of the whole amount of Irish exports to all the world, about eight-ninths are sent to Great Britain and to British dependencies; that of the exports from Ireland to Great Britain, amounting in value to 5,600,000*l.* nearly the whole is received in our ports free of duty, but is subject to export duties in Ireland, and contributes there to her local revenue as a charge imposed on our consumption. On the other hand, that what we send to Ireland is about a tenth only of our whole export; that about two-fifths of what is so sent to Ireland, consist of foreign articles exported free of duty. That though the entire trade of Ireland with this country is about one-ninth of our whole commerce, the revenue received upon it, instead of being one-ninth of our customs, is less than the 140th part. For example; that Ireland pays only 47,500*l.* in duties of customs upon the whole of her trade with us, at the same time that we are receiving from other nations in customs 6,850,000*l.*; and even from that small amount of 47,500*l.* we pay on the average about 35,000*l.* a year in bounties on Irish linens.

But it is not merely that the imports from Ireland are free of duty here. What we export to Ireland is highly charged by her. She accordingly raised annually, on her trade with Great Britain and the British dependencies, by the average of the last three years, a revenue of 622,000*l.*; of which sum, 194,000*l.* were levied on English products and manufactures. The duties which she levies annually on her whole trade with all other parts, amount to about 209,000*l.* And yet, notwithstanding all these encouragements, Ireland, with a population equal, perhaps, to one-third of the British population, has a trade equal to not more than one-ninth of the trade of Great Britain.

And, lastly, that the small and disproportionate commerce which she possesses is almost entirely dependent on British generosity, and on laws made in Great Britain.—My lords, there is a well-known line, "Isthæc commemoratio quasi exprobatio est immemoris beneficii." I mention it merely to deprecate and disclaim the application of it. The statement which I this day submit to your lordships is not given grudgingly, nor for the purpose of conveying either reproach or menace. It is my sincere wish neither to irritate nor to alarm; but to conciliate, and, if possible, to convince. It would be idle to imagine, that, in a British parliament, this great question can be debated with flattery, and complaisance, and reserves, and on Irish interests only. The people of Ireland ought not to be kept in ignorance, that numerous and essential benefits are conferred on them without reciprocity; but that those benefits, without union, remain liable, on any eventual disagreement, to a sudden explosion, with the utter ruin of all the Irish interests dependent on trade and manufactures. I have not hesitated to display these truths to our own manufacturers and merchants; because I know it to be their wish, as it always has been mine, to extend to Ireland, even without union, every accession of prosperity that can be made compatible with our own well-being and security. If, indeed, it should ever appear that Ireland were seeking strength at our expense, in order to make that strength operate to the weakening of the British empire, then and then only would the manufacturers and merchants object loudly to the system of gratuitous concessions; and then, and only then, would I join my voice to theirs. And surely it cannot be either unfriendly or ungenerous to point out to the party obliged, the means of giving both permanency and effect to the benefits which are conferred. Can the superior country be expected to enrich, beyond certain limits, the inferior, without having some security that the wealth, and strength, and resources of the one, may be considered as the wealth, strength, and resources of the other. Or is it to be expected that capi-

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tals and commercial credit shall be transferred to a country struggling under an anomalous, incompetent, and disturbed government, and maintaining a claim of right to adopt at any time adverse connexions and interests? Nothing less than union can satisfy these questions. We cannot rest on the flimsy and undefined protestation so often repeated, and so imperfectly realized, that "the affections of Ireland are unalienable, and that both kingdoms shall stand and fall together." Let the union take place, and all commercial distinctions, and all political jealousies, will be annihilated; for there can be no competition between two parts of the same kingdom, having incorporated interests directed by one legislature.—These reasonings are not new: in the discussions between the Scotch and English commissioners, under Charles 2nd, it was admitted by the Scots, that, without union, they could have no pretensions to commercial privileges, beyond what might be given to any alien power; and that all indulgences enjoyed whilst the two nations remained separate, must, in their nature, be subject to English control and to English laws. And it was then also particularly stated, that if Ireland possessed any advantages in the English trade, they depended solely on her being bound by English laws; or by laws made in Ireland, but originating in the English privy-council.

What then, my lords, are the multiplied and inestimable benefits which our address and propositions hold out to Ireland? The preservation of her actual advantages, the extension of capitals, the increased employment of her people, with the consequent cultivation and softening of their minds and manners; and, above all, the introduction of a middle class, one of the great wants of Ireland, and the most important link of security between the highest and lowest orders. Still leaving to her the same constitution, the same liberties, the same laws, and the same privileges that she enjoys at present. We do not, however, propose this measure as calculated at once to dispel the cloud of foreign war and domestic treasons, which have so long darkened the Irish atmosphere. Undoubtedly the union of the two countries might tend to correct the pestilential exhalations which prevail. But that effect would be gradual, and perhaps slow. I look rather to the effect which would be produced on a return of peace. Ireland would then be governed as the rest of the British empire is governed; a new order of things would take place; and the manners, principles, and opinions, of the two islands would at last be assimilated. Can it, my lords, be offensive to add, that Ireland ought to feel an honourable pride in being invited to a union with all those blessings of industry, order, and law, which have rendered Great Britain the glory and bulwark of civil society, and have secured to her the envy and admiration of the world?

And here I shall close, trusting that with fairness and moderation I have urged what occurs to me, in support of a measure which, in the emphatical words of the king's message, "may best tend to improve and perpetuate a connexion essential to the common security of the two kingdoms, and to augment and consolidate the strength, power, and resources, of the British empire." We know that this measure is dreaded by the revolutionists of the day: we have seen that the separation of the two kingdoms is the first object of the unprincipled and implacable nation which is making a wild and cruel war on the liberties of mankind. The separation also of Scotland from England was in like manner sought in the very beginning of this contest. "We rejoice," said the society of United Irishmen in Dublin to their delegates in Scotland, in 1792, "that the Scots do not consider themselves as merged and melted down into another country, and that, in the great question to which our address alludes, they are still Scotland." The Revolutionary Committee of Nine, assembled in Dublin on the 9th April, 1795, expressed themselves in the same spirit, by a resolution, "collectively and individually to resist even their own emancipation, if made to depend on the fatal measure of union with the sister kingdom."

My lords, in this awful period of crimes and calamities, amidst the subversion of states and empires, and when the whole system of human affairs seems to be convulsed and endangered, the great and glorious fabric of British liberty stands unmoved and unshaken. We offer to Ireland the full participation of our happiness and security. And unless Providence shall have withdrawn from her all mercy and protecting influence; unless the dispensations are to be such as to number her among the wrecks of nations, she will gladly and gratefully receive our

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offer, and will become an integral part of the united kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.—There remains one point, my lords, on which before I sit down, I must say a few words. Some of the noble lords who seemed to oppose the measure of union, have been pleased to talk much, though somewhat indefinitely, respecting what is most improperly termed, Catholic emancipation. I am not disposed to follow them into the entanglements of a discussion in which I see no possible good, and much possible mischief; nor is such discussion now necessary. Our fifth and eighth resolutions are clear and intelligible, and do not seem either to require or to admit any amendment. It has long been my opinion, that whatever may be the indulgencies, whether more or less limited, to the Catholics in England; the measure of those indulgencies ought to guide our discretion with respect to the Catholics in Ireland. I am of opinion, that such a rule is best calculated for the security, happiness, and true interests of both persuasions. I sincerely lamented the abrupt and wide departure from that rule in 1793. But I will not look with an unavailing regret to what must now be considered as irrevocable; and I rejoice that our future adherence to that rule must be one of the many important consequences of a legislative union.

The Bishop of *Landaff* said:—My lords; In rising to deliver my opinion on a subject which has already been illustrated by the eloquence, and exhausted by the wisdom of some of the ablest speakers in this and in the other House of Parliament, in this and in another kingdom, I cannot but feel an apprehension lest I should be considered by your lordships in the unfavourable light of a man unnecessarily vexing the reluctant ear, with a dull repetition, as it were of a thrice-told tale. But my heart is so much in this business, and my mind has been so long accustomed to contemplate it, as an object of the first political importance, that I must entreat your lordships indulgence, whilst I explain my sentiments upon it. I will do this as briefly and as clearly as I can. When the late duke of Rutland, whose memory will be ever dear to me, was lord lieutenant of Ireland, he honoured me with his confidence, and conversed with me on many subjects of political importance. The Irish propositions, as they were called, were then under discussion. I own they had my approbation, though they were properly enough, ultimately, abandoned, on the ground of their not being acceptable to the Irish nation. In writing to him about that time, I perfectly well remember having said—you and your friend the minister of England, would immortalize your characters, if, instead of a mere commercial arrangement, you could accomplish, by honourable means, and on equitable terms, a legislative union between the two kingdoms. His answer to this suggestion was so singular that I shall never forget it—it was to this effect—he wholly approved of the measure; but added, the man who should attempt to carry the measure into execution would be tarred and feathered. Whether this repugnance to a union was, at that time, the general sentiment of the Irish nation, or, which I suspect, of a few leading individuals in that country, I have no means of ascertaining, nor is it now of any use to inquire. I have mentioned this circumstance to show to your lordships, that the opinion which I mean this day to deliver on this great subject, is not an opinion rashly or recently taken up, in consequence of the late occurrences in Ireland (though I am ready to own that those occurrences have very much strengthened me in the propriety of the opinion), but it is an opinion deliberately formed many years ago, when the mind was neither heated by resentment against rebellion, nor disturbed by the apprehension of danger, and when I was much more in the habit of considering such subjects, than I have been of late years.

My life, my lords, from seventeen to sixty-one, has been pleasantly, and, I hope, not unprofitably spent, in the pursuit of knowledge, and in abstract reasoning on a variety of topics. I have occasionally and incidentally reasoned on political subjects, but this, I presume, may be forgiven to a churchman, who, at this advanced period of his age, can boldly and honestly declare in the hearing of your lordships, and in the face of his country, that all his political speculations were ever founded on what appeared to him, the broad basis of public utility, and ever proceeded from an unbiassed mind: and on the present occasion, I feel that my mind is as unbiassed as that of any gentleman either in Great Britain or Ireland.

There are many, I am sensible, in both countries, who understand this subject, in all its relations and dependencies, better than I do; but I am not ignorant of it; I

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have not thought of it slightly; I at least understand enough of it to enable me to form for my own guidance (which is all I aim at), not an obscure, not a hesitating, but a clear and determined judgment; and having formed such a judgment, I will not be deterred from declaring it, on account of its unpopularity in a country, for whose interests I have always cherished a serious and sincere concern. My opinion then is this—that a cordial union will be much more advantageous to Ireland than it will be to Great Britain, but that it will be eminently useful to both countries. If I were to express my sentiments of the utility of a union, in few words I would say, that a union will enrich Ireland—that it will not impoverish Great Britain—that it will render the empire, as to defence, the strongest empire in Europe.

The strength of every state principally depends on the number of its people. The lands of Great Britain and Ireland, if cultivated to their full extent, to the extent, if this measure takes place, they will be in half a century, would support a population of thirty millions at least. Thirty millions of people would afford five or six millions of men able to bear arms; and either five or six millions of men able to bear arms, would afford, when occasion should require, one million of men in arms, without distressing either the agriculture, the manufactures, or the commerce of the country—but with a million of men in arms, with insular situations, with a free constitution, with united hearts, what could Great Britain or Ireland have to fear from the combined aggression of all Europe? We might then be more indifferent than we could hitherto prudently have been, to continental politics; we might then suffer the princes of the Continent to settle their own disputes without our throwing our men or money into any scale to preserve that equilibrium of despotic power, which as free and happy subjects of a limited monarchy, we cannot but wish, for the interests of humanity, had no existence any where.

Having expressed my general approbation of the general measure, I might proceed to a regular discussion of several questions connected with it; but I will not do this; they are questions of too delicate a nature, and of too difficult investigation to have any justice done to them, within the compass of a short debate: I will mention two or three of them. It is certainly a question of magnitude, on which wise and good men may differ whether the present parliament of Ireland has, or has not, a right to vote its own extinction; and if this be a question with respect to Ireland, a similar one applies to Great Britain, whether the present parliament of Great Britain has or has not, a right to accede to a union. A volume might be written on this subject, and the question would still remain undecided, unless the principle on which it must be argued was previously settled, unless a previous question was determined, and the previous question appears to me to be this—what is the quantum of power, what the quality of trust confided constitutionally by the constituents to their representatives in parliament? On this previous point, men are not likely to come to any unanimity of opinion, but on an agreement in this point, depends the decision of parliamentary rights, and parliamentary competency. Some men dislike all discussion of competency and rights; I cannot agree with them; right and obligation are correlative terms; and unless we understand what is right, how can we understand our obligation not to do wrong?

There is another question of high importance—whether the Roman Catholics in Ireland, being a great majority of the people, have or have not, a right to some ecclesiastical establishment, and to the removal of all civil disabilities. This question becomes more perplexed, as to both parts of it, but especially as to the former part of it, than at the first view it may appear to any one to be, when it is considered that the property, by which such an establishment must be maintained, is principally in the hands of a small minority of the people, who will not receive any direct and immediate benefit from such an establishment. Whenever this question is agitated,—and the sooner, perhaps, it is agitated and settled, the better,—I hope it will be remembered, that nothing can be expedient to be done, which it is not just and lawful to do, but that many things may be right, just, and lawful to be done, which may not, politically speaking, be expedient to be done. And to Protestants and Catholics, I would recommend the advice of an ancient father of the Church, who, in composing the animosities of contending religious parties, counselled each side to give up little things, that both sides might

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obtain great things—peace, tranquillity, and concord.

There is a third question more important, if possible, than either of the other two; and of so difficult a nature, that the most prospective wisdom of the most consummate statesman cannot decide upon it with any degree of certainty. Whether the British constitution will, or will not, undergo some change; and if any, what change from the introduction of Irish members into our two Houses of Parliament:—on these and similar questions, as well as on commercial advantages and disadvantages attending a union, I could speak at some length, but I purposely decline entering into detail on any of them; and I do this, partly from thinking that this is not the proper time for such discussion; partly from a persuasion that those to whom this great matter will be entrusted, do not stand in need of my advice on any point, and principally from my dislike to appearing forward in obtruding my political speculations on the attention of the House, having no ambition whatever to affect the character of a statesman—a character indeed, when wisely and honourably sustained, of the highest importance to human happiness, but which does not befit a retired and unconnected churchman, who wishes to spend the remainder of his days in contemplations of quite a different tendency.

On the subject of the union, as far as it respects Ireland, three different opinions have been adopted in that country. The first is the opinion of those who think that a union with Great Britain is the most probable and effectual means of securing, of enlarging and rendering permanent the prosperity of Ireland. Whatever may be the numbers, character, or situation of the persons who entertain this opinion, I have no scruple in saying that I concur in sentiment with them. A second opinion is, that British connexion is, indeed, essential to Irish prosperity, but that British union will be destructive of that prosperity. This opinion has been supported by men of such approved integrity, and of such acknowledged ability, by men every way so respectable, that I suspect my own faculties of reasoning when I presume to differ from them. In an ordinary mode of reasoning one would say that if British connexion is essential to Irish prosperity, then the closer that connexion is, the greater will be that prosperity; this, I say, my lords, would be an ordinary inference, unless it could be shown that the connexion, when it has approached to a certain degree of proximity, changes at once its nature, like some physical powers which are attractive to a certain distance, and then become repulsive. The present bond of connexion between the two kingdoms, is that of their having the same king; the proposed bond is that of their having the same legislature. How slight the former bond is, has been so fully shown by a noble secretary, in a former debate on this subject, that I will not say one word upon it; but surely it requires no depth of argumentation to apprehend that if a connexion with a third part of a legislature be useful, one with the whole legislature will be abundantly more useful; for the first is liable to be obstructed in its efficiency, or wholly destroyed, by many foreseen and many unforeseen circumstances; but the last can meet with no impediment in its operation, and can only be destroyed by, what can never be taken into deliberation, a dissolution of the government itself.

But it is probable that I do not perfectly understand what is meant by the terms British connexion; and there is no greater source of error in reasoning, than the using terms without annexing to them definitive ideas. Is it, then, meant by British connexion, on which Irish prosperity is said to depend, that the trade and manufactures of Great Britain are to be crippled in operation, and limited in extent, in order that those of Ireland may be invigorated and enlarged? No. The Irish are too liberal a people to have formed so selfish an expectation. Is it meant by British connexion that the lands and property of Great Britain are to be mortgaged to the last guinea in building, equipping, and maintaining fleets for the protection of the coasts and the commerce of Ireland? No—the Irish are too just a people to desire that Great Britain should make so dear a sacrifice. Is it meant by British connexion that when Ireland shall have become rich and powerful, and shall have established a beneficial commerce with Holland, Spain, France, or any other country, and Great Britain having declared war against any of those countries, is it meant that Ireland shall be at liberty to remain at peace, and to prosecute her commercial advantages, leaving Great Britain to fight her own battles? No—

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Ireland is too wise a nation not to see that this conduct would be a direct separation. What then can be meant by British connexion, except this—that Great Britain and Ireland shall for ever have the same friends and the same foes, that they shall have a common strength, that this common strength shall be supported by a common purse, to which each shall contribute according to its ability; that this common strength shall be directed by a coincidence, or rather by an identity of councils. that Great Britain shall make no laws injurious to Ireland, nor Ireland any injurious to Great Britain; that there shall be no commercial jealousies, but a constant reciprocation of benefits; in a word, that Great Britain and Ireland shall be like the two arms of the body, never disposed to quarrel with and beat each other, but always ready to unite their efforts in defence of that common body from which both derive their strength and vigour. If all this is meant by British connexion, I see not that it differs except in name and efficiency from British Union; and if less than this is meant, British connexion will be destitute of that stability which is necessary to secure the permanency of Irish prosperity.

The third opinion which prevails in Ireland, on this subject, says, that British connexion and British union are equally and irreconcileably hostile to the interests of Ireland. This opinion may, for aught I know, have been privately entertained by some individuals for many years; but it has not, till lately, been publicly avowed. I am not disposed to call every man a rebel and a traitor who maintains this opinion as a speculative opinion; but let who will maintain it, I must say that it is a preposterous opinion;—that it is not supported by any experience derived from the history of nations;—that it is not bottomed on any knowledge of human nature; and that it is wholly devoid of that first feature of political wisdom—foresight.

I will speak my whole mind on this point. Ireland, as a graft inserted into the stock of the British empire, may throw out branches in every direction, and bear fruit on every twig; but if you separate it from this connexion, and plant it in a soil by itself, it will neither strike root downwards, nor bear fruit upwards, for a hundred years, though it should be left to itself, free from the annoyance of its neighbours; but this Irish graft cannot be left to itself; it will either be stunted and overshadowed by the mighty branching of the British oak, or it will be poisoned by the pestilential exhalations of the trees of liberty, which France will plant around it;—trees which have hitherto produced no fruit in Europe, or in the world, except the apples of Sodom,—alluring to the eye, but bitter and poisonous to the palate. Ireland cannot stand alone. Would to God! that there was moderation and justice enough in great states to permit lesser states to enjoy their independence, and to prosecute their interests in a state of separation from them; but this is a system of politics more to be wished than expected, in the present condition of Christian morality. Ireland cannot stand alone; she must, of necessity, be connected; nay, she must, for her own safety, in the present convulsed state of European politics, in the present progress of strange political opinions, be united either to Great Britain or France. She is not, indeed, at liberty to make her choice, without withdrawing that allegiance, which the wisest and best men in Ireland have not, I am convinced, any disposition to withdraw; but if she were unfettered by any bond of connexion; at full liberty to make a choice; is there a man in all Ireland, of a good heart and a cool head, who could hesitate in preferring a union with Great Britain to one with France? United with Great Britain, Ireland will soon become a lusty, well-looking, well-fed limb of the British body politic: united with France, she would be a withered, shrivelled, palsied, starved excrescence, which might be cut off and thrown aside, whenever interest or caprice should render a separation necessary.

I foresee, with great satisfaction, the time when, if this union takes place, the whole state of Ireland will be changed. The overflowing of British capital will, on a peace, instead of finding its way into France or America, settle in Ireland. It will, in time, convert the bogs of that country into corn-fields; it will cover its barren mountains with forests; it will dig its mines, cut its canals, erect its fabrics, explore new channels of commerce, and improve the old ones; in a word, by supplying labour, it will render the people industrious, enlightened, contented, and happy. I, my lords, shall not live to see the effects of this measure, for great objects do not attain their full perfection at

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once, but our posterity will see them, and will have cause to bless the enlarged policy of two legislatures, which, rising superior to petty jealousies, which sacrificing partial interests on the altar of general safety, have coalesced into one, for the benefit of both.

But though I am, on the most dispassionate grounds, a sincere friend to a union, I am no friend to its being accomplished except by the most just and honourable means. A union participates of the nature of a contract, or to speak more properly, it is a contract of the highest kind. Now it is of the essence of every contract, that there should be the free consent of the contracting parties, founded on a cool and comprehensive view of the subject, and on a persuasion of the utility to be derived therefrom. Ireland does not yet seem to be persuaded of the utility which she will derive from this union; nor has Ireland (if I may be allowed to say so without giving offence, and I certainly do not mean to give any) yet, I think, taken a cool and comprehensive view of the subject; at all events, she does not yet seem disposed to become a party to the contract. Under such circumstances, the contract cannot, in my opinion, be fairly entered into. What, then, is to be done?—Precisely that which Great Britain is doing,—and is, I trust, prepared to do. Great Britain is giving time to Ireland to consider this subject in all its bearings; and Great Britain is, I trust, prepared to say, if not by words, to say by actions, to her sister kingdom—be persuaded, that, in proposing this measure, I have not been actuated by any selfish, insidious, or oppressive views;—be assured, that in prosecuting what has been proposed, I have no point to carry but what will be full as useful to Ireland as to Great Britain; conscious of the integrity of my intention, and convinced of the utility of the measure, had I the means of influencing the Parliament of Ireland to a corrupt approbation of it, I would, on this occasion, disdain to use them. I will not tamper with the conscience, I will not attempt to undermine the public probity, or to assail the personal independence of any individual in Ireland; I do not wish any man, on either side of the water, to support this measure from a principle of gratitude for favours received, much less from a principle of expectation of favours to be conferred; but, on the other hand, I must deprecate all opposition to it, originating in local prejudices, partial consideration, individual interest, or in what is least deserving the attention of a wise man—a desire of popular applause: all I wish, is, that the subject may be fully and intelligently examined, deliberately discussed, and decided freely. Great Britain may not, perhaps, be able to approve the wisdom of the decision, but she knows how to respect the independence of the sister kingdom, and will acquiesce in the decision, be it what it may. Such, my lords, I humbly think, is the language; such the conduct which Great Britain should use, and which, if we may judge from what has been said in this House concerning free consent, she is disposed to use towards Ireland; it is a conduct conformable to the eternal rules of immutable justice, it is suited to the magnanimity of this great nation, it is calculated to conciliate the affections, and to rivet the regard of the high spirited, indeed; but, at the same time, of the warm-hearted people of Ireland.

I have detained your lordships too long, and in doing so, I have probably done as much violence to my own feelings as to your patience; for I do feel a daily increasing reluctance to the mingling in public political debate. But this great subject has compelled me to come forward. I perceive that every thing which is dear to us as individuals, as fathers of families, as members of civil society, is at stake. The wild ambition of France supported on the right hand by the annihilating doctrines of Epicurus, supported on the left by the wicked hopes of the idle and the profligate to rise to distinction by public confusion, and every where assisted, except in this happy country, by forms of government more or less arbitrary and oppressive, to which the mass of the people can feel little attachment; this ambition, thus supported, thus assisted, is stalking like a desolating fiend throughout the earth, and wherever it puts its iron foot, it crushes, with undistinguished ruin, all orders of men, and levels with the ground every civil, every ecclesiastical constitution. When I view this monster at a distance, I contemplate it with abhorrence; its nearer approach, if it must approach nearer, I shall view not without anxiety, but without despondency. The good providence of God may, and I trust it will, and unless the sins of the nation obstruct its influence, we may be certain

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that it will defend us from the enemy; but no human means (I speak in the sincerity of my heart), no human means can be devised more suited to this end than a liberal, cordial, legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland.*

Lord *Minto* said:—My lords; In yielding to the desire which it is natural for every public man to feel, of delivering his sentiments on this great question, it could not be my intention, at any period of the discussion, to exhaust, or even to touch on all the many and various points of this comprehensive subject, and I must be yet less disposed to such an attempt in circumstances so little favourable as the present, I mean, after the talents, the learning, and the eloquence of two countries have preceded me, and have, indeed, left little for such as me to glean, even in this vast and fertile field. I shall, therefore, confine myself within bounds better suited to my own capacity, as well as to the measure of indulgence which I can have any pretensions to expect from your lordships; and shall content myself with stating as clearly, but as shortly as I am able, a few thoughts on the principal and leading topics of this argument, especially such as have made the strongest impression on my own judgment, and have had the greatest share in determining the opinion I profess in favour of the proposed measure.

In deliberating on this question, the first proposition which seems to impress itself on every mind, is the convenience, amounting indeed to a necessity, not merely for the advantage and benefit, but for the preservation and security of both countries, that there should subsist between Great Britain and Ireland, a close and intimate connexion of one description or other. The most disadvantageous situation in which either country can be placed, is that of total disconnection. Indeed when I say disadvantageous, I certainly speak too feebly. I mean that this condition would expose both countries to the greatest quantity and variety of evil, and oppose the most insurmountable barriers to national improvement and prosperity of any that can be imagined. Fundamental as this proposition will be found in the argument, it is nevertheless one on which it is unnecessary to dwell long. I find it, in the first place, conceded on all hands, and I think myself intitled to claim on this point a general or rather universal assent. For I presume it will hardly be required of me, that I should condescend to treat as an exception, worthy of notice, the opinions of those who call themselves united Irishmen, or of those other wretched men, whom the vigilance of government and of parliament, has lately exposed to the scorn and execration of a country which they disgrace, under the title of United Englishmen. These men may call themselves by what names they please, United Irish, or United English. In my language they can be known only by the appellation of French Irish, French English. They are merely partizans of the ancient and inveterate enemy of their country. They are wedded to the interests of that enemy, and enlisted under his standard. They are confederates in every desperate and wicked project of a foreign state, for the subjugation and ruin of their native land, and their opinions are entitled precisely to the same degree of deference that we should pay to the sentiments or wishes of the French Directory itself, on a question of British interest. I am, indeed, sorry to learn, that these extremes either of delusion or corruption, should exist in a single instance within the limits of this island: but since such men are, I cannot but ob-

* "When I had sat down, the bishop of Rochester (Horsley) complimented me with saying, that he had never heard such a speech in the House of Lords, and should never hear such another. I could not but be pleased with having extracted, as it were, this praise from a man who did not like me; but the satisfaction which I received from the bishop's commendation was far inferior to that which the following Note from Dr. Joseph Wharton gave me, to whom I was very little known:

'*Nerot's Hotel, April* 13, 1799.

'My lord; Though I feel very strongly the 'impertinence and impropriety I am guilty 'of, yet I cannot restrain myself from ex- 'pressing the great satisfaction and pleasure 'I have received from reading your lordship's 'most eloquent, nervous, convincing, and un- 'answerable speech on the Union with Ire- 'land. Happy it would be for us if your lord- 'ship's counsels and opinions were always fol- 'lowed and put in execution. With, &c.

'Jos. Warton.'

"Though the colouring of this compliment is, I am sensible, overcharged, yet I should belie my feelings if I did not own that it gave me great pleasure; for Dr. Joseph Warton was a scholar, and not only a scholar but a man of taste, but what, at that time, was a rare character indeed, a genuine Whig."—Anecdotes of the Life of Bishop Warton, by Himself, Vol. 2, p. 89.

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serve with satisfaction their hostility to every species of connexion between Great Britain and Ireland, and most of all to that best and most perfect connexion which is now in contemplation. For when I learn from France, and her worthy Irish and English associates, that the present union between England and Scotland stands in the way of their fraternal views towards Great Britain, and that the union with Ireland is a death's blow to their hopes of annihilating the British empire, I cannot but accept this testimony of the enemy, as the strongest and best confirmation of the favour which I profess towards the measure which they oppose. But I shall not be expected to argue with this kind of adversary. We are engaged with them in a different sort of controversy, and it is the *ultima ratio* alone that can settle the debate between us. With this exception, however, the necessity of connexion is not only admitted, but warmly asserted by all those who have taken a part in the debate on this question of union, whether their judgments have been favourable or adverse to the measure; and your lordships know, that there is no description of persons who have been more earnest to disclaim and abjure the character of what is called separatist, than those who have opposed the union in Ireland, or in this country.

But if it were not admitted, this proposition is too obvious to require much argument to prove it. A glance on the map, and a moment's reflexion, will satisfy us, that the affairs and interests of these two sister islands are too much the same, in too many points of domestic and foreign concern, not to associate them necessarily in the dangers and business of war, and in the occupations and pursuits of peace. Let us suppose any one brought from another hemisphere, totally unacquainted, not only with the history and concerns, but even with the shape and form of this quarter of the globe, before whom a map of Europe should be laid for the first time; and let such a man be required to conjecture the distribution of the different countries under his eye, into their respective states and governments. Whatever his opinion might be concerning other portions of Europe, I am persuaded we should all anticipate his confident judgment, that the British isles, at least, formed one state. Let us, in effect, cast our own eye, for an instant, on this map—we shall see these two islands not merely contiguous, but lying as it were in the very bosom and embraces of each other—we shall observe, not only their mutual vicinity, but their insulation, and their insulation together, from the rest of Europe; we shall see their relative position with regard to each other, and to every other part of the world, and especially their reciprocal dependence, for a secure and undisturbed navigation, in a great part of the circumference of both. These and a thousand other obvious particulars, which I do not enumerate merely to avoid abusing your indulgence with considerations familiar to us all, must convince us, that in a state of total political separation, there could hardly be a single transaction, or an instant of their existence, in which these two countries would not be rivals, and if rivals, enemies. It is easy to conceive the enhanced and aggravated state of warfare waged in this manner between countries possessing each, in a greater degree, the means of offence, and in a less degree, those of defence, than in any other possible situation. We shall also recollect, that if one of these countries should be engaged in war with a third, as Great Britain with France, the other would present advantages to the enemy which it could not otherwise possess; and it will not be difficult to foresee, that in a state of separation, the mutual jealousy and habitual animosity likely to prevail between the neighbours, aided by the intrigues and importunity of the enemy, will, in all probability, draw the neutral island into a direct or indirect participation in these hostilities. Thus will these two countries, instead of contributing to each other's comfort, security, and greatness, as they might do under a wiser and happier system, only harass, enfeeble, and endanger each other, just in proportion to their respective means and resources, exhausting their mutual attention and energy, rather in watching and repressing each other, than in repelling common danger, promoting common interests, or exalting their common greatness and glory. Such a condition, in a word, disturbs the tranquillity of peace, and shortens its duration, while it multiplies, a thousand-fold, the perils and evils of war. It is manifest that the smaller and weaker country of the two, must experience these disadvantages yet more sensibly than its powerful neighbour. In its differences with the other, if the aid and alliance of a third power be sought,

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that service must be purchased by some consideration or other; and we are taught, by reason as well as history, the sort of price that is paid by an inferior, for the proud and politic protection of a powerful state. As the comparatively feeble and poor cannot discharge such a debt in positive force or wealth, it must give what it has, and pay its quota in general subserviency, that is to say, in a base and habitual dependence, little short, either in degradation or ruin, of positive subjection. It appears, in fine, to me, that a smaller country, situated between two great rivals, as Ireland is, can hardly hope for an interval of tranquillity, security, or dignity. Dignity may at once be put out of the question, for having no real and positive force to support it, such a country must live, from day to day, by intrigue, the most degrading species of policy, and that which it seems the most impossible to reconcile with any sense of national pride or honour. It can as little look for tranquillity or security; for besides its own quarrels, the causes of which are infinitely multiplied, in a separate state, by that very vicinity which might otherwise extinguish them; besides, I say, its own quarrels, it will be dragged perpetually into those of both its neighbours, and will indeed generally find itself the bone of contention, to be worried by both, and to endure therefore that double scourge, that complicated desolation and ruin, which fall on those unhappy countries that are themselves the theatre of wars, in which perhaps they have no interest, or none other than that of being themselves the prize to be fought for, and destined to reward the conqueror, or purchase the peace of the vanquished. We shall perceive, on the other hand, with the same facility and with greater satisfaction, the inducements and advantages of connexion, by which the resources of the one, instead of being to be subtracted from those of the other, flow rather into a general stock, out of which, as from a common heart, strength and prosperity may circulate to the remotest extremities of both, and the right arm of the empire be nourished and fortified, without impoverishing or withering the left. But I will not insist on this conceded point, and shall assume it as a thing proved or granted, that connexion is necessary for the mutual security and happiness of Great Britain and Ireland.

The question then arises, on the best and most eligible mode, or form of that connexion. On this point also I have a settled opinion, which I consider as a main and principal hinge of this argument. I wish, indeed, to state and to argue it, in the first instance, as a general proposition; but if it be proved, and made out satisfactorily in that form, it seems decisive on the particular question, and will establish, on principle and reason, the same conclusion, to which our judgment may have been led on more practical grounds. The proposition then is this, that when two countries are so circumstanced as mutually to require connexion, the only mode of connexion which can perfectly remove the evils of separation, and fully confer the benefit of union, is a perfect identity and incorporation of their governments. All other relations, of a more partial and imperfect nature, are subject to many inconveniences while they subsist, and are besides of a limited duration. By limited, I do not mean merely precarious. I consider their expiration not merely as possible or probable, but as certain; and besides the perpetual and restless struggles, which are for ever vexing these contentious relations while they last, they appear to me to possess this fundamental and characteristic vice—I mean that of tending gradually, and though perhaps not always rapidly, yet certainly and inevitably, by the very law of their constitution and nature, to a total extinction and dissolution. Nations, then, connected in this manner, will necessarily arrive, at one period or other, at the alternative of separation, towards which they naturally tend, involving probably mutual and perpetual hostility, or that perfect incorporation and unity which is productive, not only of all the blessings of internal tranquillity, but of all the advantages, both in strength and prosperity, which flow from the union of their joint resources, and which are increased, by combination, far beyond the simple addition to their amount.

That such are the properties and defects of these imperfect connexions, we shall easily satisfy ourselves, by a very short and cursory view of one or two of the principal relations of that description, and I shall begin with that which I conceive to stand first also in chronological order—I mean conquest. For I believe it will generally be found, when two countries are situated in such a manner as to invite, by their local positions, a connexion between their governments, the stronger of

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the two, or that which is first enabled, by an earlier civilization and superior population, to aim at foreign enterprise, will attempt the conquest of the other, and if the attempt succeeds, that mode of relation is established between them, which I am now treating of. Conquest may, indeed, in one sense, be understood to express only the means employed for uniting them under one government, or bringing them together, and in that acceptation, conquest may, no doubt, lead to any mode of connexion, and, amongst the rest, may tend at once to that which is the most perfect and the best. Of this, indeed, history will furnish examples, though I believe not frequent; for war is but a rough courtship, and violence cannot be expected, in all cases, to procure so happy a union as that, which at once incorporated the Roman and the Sabine people. At present, however, I use the word conquest to express, not the means or instrument of union, but the relation which is the consequence of victory, and which subsists after it. In other words, I mean that dominion which is exercised by the conqueror on the title of conquest, while the countries continue distinct; or that sovereignty, which being founded by the sword, is measured by the power of enforcing it, on one hand, and the inability to resist, on the other. In comparing, as we are now doing, the advantages and disadvantages of the different kinds of connexion between nations, we may, no doubt, dismiss at once from the argument the consideration of conquest; for I presume we shall agree that this is the worst of all. It is indeed the most wretched condition of human slavery. The relation of master and servant, or even of master and slave, amongst individuals, or of sovereign and subject among the members of one commonwealth, even under the most despotic forms of government, may be conceived to produce, at least in some instances, or in some degree, a mutual benefit and convenience. But it is not so amongst nations. A master nation will, I think, generally be found a tyrant, and a subject nation is generally a slave. The submission and obedience of the one, does not purchase protection or kindness and the authority of the other yields little profit. The dominion of mere conquest, in a word, confers on the sovereign but a barren sceptre, and a crown of thorns; and very fit it should be so. Yet under all these discouragements it will generally be found, that a strong sense of the evils attending separation, stimulated perhaps by that passion, I mean ambition, which seems to actuate all governments, or those who administer them, will induce the stronger power to seek connexion by that course, unless precluded by the establishment of some better or less objectionable mode of relation.

Amongst these I shall next speak of federal connexion, and I am the more inclined to say a few words on that subject, as I have understood that, in the variety of opinions entertained on this question of union with Ireland, some have been supposed to lean towards a connexion of that nature. I confess, however, that I can find nothing in that mode of relation to recommend it; and every thing we know of such confederacies seems to prove them, in the first place, inadequate to the purposes of union, and, in the next place, of very precarious duration. The fundamental vice of these federal constitutions seems to be, that professing to provide only for some common interests, they not only leave, but it is, in some sort, their spirit to establish, a distinctness, and even an opposition of interests, on all or many other points. Speaking of national interests, I believe it will be safe to consider distinctness as in general but a convertible term for opposition; and the different parts of federal union are, I think, generally to be accounted rivals in respect of all in which they are distinct. Their opposition is indeed not limited even by that principle, but extends often to the very *casus fœderis*; I mean to those concerns which are common, and the general interests in which is meant to be provided for by the conditions and obligations of the union. It must be observed, by every one who reads the history of such governments, that in the interpretation and performance of their federal engagements, the parties generally act in a spirit of rival and adverse contention. The passions of the multitude seem to flow naturally in that course; and the narrow genius of those who will often have the lead in the discordant councils of such states, seems prone enough to fall in with this popular humour. We shall frequently observe them more occupied in the internal jealousies and competitions of the confederate states, than in promoting the common cause; and especially in moments of common danger and exertion, they will often discover a greater apprehension of

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contributing a grain too much in the federal scale, than a grain too little for the success of that object, which is the only rational motive for exertion at all. They are, in a word, more afraid of giving some paltry advantage to a friend and associate, than solicitous to defeat the common enemy, or to provide for common safety. Irrational as this conduct is, I may appeal to observation and history for the existence as well as for the fatal effects of this mania, both in federal governments, and in the looser and yet more temporary and occasional confederacies of mere allies.

We have ourselves lived in a very eventful period, and have but too large an experience in revolutions of every sort. We have, amongst others, witnessed the recent downfal of a great federal government; I mean the United Provinces: and I certainly agree with what I understood to be the sentiment of a noble lord who opened this discussion on a former day, in thinking that the sudden and rapid overthrow of that government, and the degrading ruin and slavery into which that celebrated people has been plunged almost without a struggle, may be traced to the very vice and defect in the constitution of such governments which I have just described. It is surely reasonable to doubt, whether a more prompt and combined application of the resources which that country possessed, than, it seems, the distinctness and contrariety of its parts admitted of, might not have averted, at least the easy and inglorious conquest of a country, whose accidental and temporary union under the extraordinary talents of the great prince of Orange, was able first to defy, and then to humble and defeat France, in the plenitude of Louis 14th's power and greatness. I shall probably not differ with many of your lordships in ascribing, at least in part, to the same cause, the sudden calamities which overwhelmed another brave and respectable people, I mean the Swiss Cantons, with a rapidity and ease, which can be accounted for only on that principle. And I cannot suppress some apprehension that we may yet have to lament, even in our own day, the dissolution of the grandest confederacy which the world ever knew, the integrity of which has already been too much broken not to excite anxiety and alarm for the issue, and on the stability of which, however, not only rests the safety and happiness of those extensive territories, and of the many nations which have hitherto found security and shelter under that great union, but I may say, perhaps, on which the independence and liberty of the whole of Europe, and a great proportion of the other three quarters of the globe, may essentially and eventually depend. I speak, my lords, of the Germanic body itself. But I will dwell no longer on these unpleasant topics, not immediately applicable to the question of the day, and hasten to the consideration of that species of relation which is the proper subject of your present deliberation; I mean that which now subsists between Great Britain and Ireland, and which did subsist between England and Scotland before the union.

I am to speak now of those connexions which consist in some circumstance of indentity in the municipal constitutions of the two countries; that is to say, in having some part or member of their governments the same, with a distinctness and separate independence in all the rest. Such is that of one king or executive power, with separate legislatures; and of this particular form of connexion we have undoubtedly had most experience in this empire, and can therefore speak of it with the best information and knowledge. I might, no doubt, safely appeal, at once, to that very experience for the insufficiency of such a bond, to avoid the evils of distinct existence, or to confer, in peace or war, the full benefits of connexion. But I wish, first, to say a few words to what may be considered as the principle; that is to say, to inquire what are the circumstances from which the evils of these partial relations may be thought to flow; and above all, what is the true cause of that natural and constant tendency in such governments, to weaken and diminish the bonds of connexion, till it becomes little more than nominal, and remains, perhaps, only perceptible in the struggles and convulsions of its dissolution.

The first defect then, which I remark in this mode of imperfect connexion, is similar, or perhaps I may say, precisely the same, with that which I have already observed upon, in relations merely federal. I mean that the connexion being but partial and intended for partial purposes, the great mass of interests in each nation continue distinct; the attention of each country is still pointed towards a separate view of individual interest: and the public mind if I may so express it, of the two nations, is kept distinct. I have already observed

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that distinct interests are generally opposite interests, or felt to be so by the two parties; and speaking of nations, I may add, that distinct minds are generally hostile. In these circumstances, the vicinity, and the connexion of such countries, instead of improving, as they might otherwise do, friendship and harmony between them, seem to produce the very opposite effects, and to cultivate a jealous and angry temper, prone to take offence and umbrage, and ripening every trivial discontent or difference into grounds of perfect alienation and even hostility.

Another grand source of indisposition between such countries, and that from which every one of the evils attending this mode of relation seems to me most immediately to derive, is the inequality in their relative power and influence occasioned, no doubt, by their inequality in real and positive power and influence. It follows necessarily from the very nature and constitution of human affairs, and no artificial or conventional arrangement, no provisions of positive institution can alter it, that in the union of two distinct and unequal countries, the superior must be predominant, and the inferior subordinate in their common concerns, and in the administration of the common parts of their government. Hence follows, however, a nominal independence in the inferior state accompained by a daily and irksome consciousness of real dependence and subordination. It is this contradiction between the real and nominal condition of the inferior country that I consider as the most fruitful source of those evils which afflict such connexions, and ultimately extinguish them. In governments administered in this manner, under external influence, the eyes of the nation pass over the immediate and domestic instruments of their administration, to that which must appear to them, and may indeed be truly accounted its efficient head, I mean the external power which directs its counsels. It is therefore natural that the grievances, real or imaginary, of such a country should be laid to the account of that higher cause; that its discontents, chagrins and resentments should be directed against that object; and that the exertions of patriotism, or the struggles of faction, as the case may be, the clamour and the activity the eloquence and even the virtues of popular leaders and ambitious men, should all aim at that obvious mark. They will find in the people a disposition, founded also in nature, extremely favourable to the success of such aims. I have said that the minds of two countries thus circumstanced are not only distinct, but hostile. Jealousy is the sentiment likely to prevail between them; and indeed where both being nominally, and according to their abstract rights, independent and equal, one of the two exercises, nevertheless, a clear and undisguised ascendancy over the other, jealousy may, in truth, be thought to have no very unreasonable foundation. The prevailing national sentiment, the ruling passion, then, of the inferior country, comes to be an angry, impatient and intolerant love of their independency. Whoever touches that string, reaches their heart, and commands their affections and actions. Hence we shall observe a restless and never-satisfied struggling with every circumstance either in the constitution of their government, or in the counsels and measures of their administration, which seems even to the most subtle refinements of jealousy, to affect that object; hence a perpetual straining after its improvement and perfection; and hence also those imprudent, and, surely, ungenerous advantages which are sought, in periods of common distress or danger, to extort concessions favourable to that object; concessions which do not excite gratitude in those who receive them, because they are claimed as rights, and seem to have been enforced by necessity; concessions too which seem rather to whet than to satisfy the appetite that calls for them. Each victory of this kind becomes only a vantage ground from whence another may be fought for; and thus each succession of patriots, or of demagogues seeking to enhance on the exploits of their predecessors, the improvement of independency is pushed forward until the true goal of that course comes in view.—I mean separation.

That separation is in truth the goal or winning post of this race of independency must appear very clearly when we consider what the fundamental cause of the subordination complained of is, and what therefore must be the means of reducing it. The ascendancy of the superior country consists, no doubt, in its superior power, but it is the constitutional connexion that furnishes the channel or organ, through which the power of the superior state is brought home to the inferior country. If they have the same executive power, the influence of the superior state

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operates through that channel on every branch and department of public affairs. If their legislatures, distinct in other respects, have one branch or member in common, the legislation of the inferior is bent to uniformity with the other by that power. Connexion then is the means of ascendancy in one, and the cause of subordination in the other, and it is manifest that these grievances can be alleviated, or redressed, only by diminishing or abolishing the cause. That is to say, in other words, that independency can be improved only by striking off, link after link, of the connexion, and its entire perfection can be attained only by breaking the last thread which holds the countries together.

From this account of the matter it appears unavoidable that the course I have described should be pursued in every similar case, and that these events are not to be considered as fortuitous, but as deriving from uniform and pregnant causes likely to produce the same consequences wherever they exist. We are taught, then, not less by reason, than, as we shall soon find, by experience, to expect that the natural and commendable love of independence on one hand, and the incompatibility of that independence with connexion on the other, should always lead two countries thus circumstanced to the last alternative, which I have already more than once alluded to, of separation or union; an alternative in which I am persuaded that true wisdom, and a sincere and genuine love of our country, will always make one choice, while passion and prejudice, especially private passion or prejudice, and while a blind and sophisticated pride, personating, or rather counterfeiting patriotism, may possibly prompt another.

If I have not been deceived by this reasoning, one might almost venture, without much temerity, to trace, as the pretty certain and uniform succession and progress of events, in the history of connexion between two neighbouring countries of unequal power, the course I have just described. Their connexion will probably begin in conquest—that miserable condition will gradually soften itself into some mode of dependent connexion. This will still be refined into the more flattering condition of nominal independence, accompanied, however by a real and inherent subordination; under which the uneasiness of the subordinate country, and its growing pretensions and power, will advance in the progress towards real independence, till it approaches so closely the danger of separation, that both countries will be alarmed, and take shelter from the impending calamity, in the only sanctuary that remains, I mean union. I will not say that every step in this progress will be the same in all cases. The events, such of them as happen, will probably succeed each other in the same order; but a link or two more may be found in some instances, and a link or two may be omitted in others. I think myself, however, supported not only by such reasoning as I have ventured to lay before you, but by the uniform testimony of history, at least in this observation; I mean that a partial connexion of government, between two unequal countries, is not a permanent condition in which they can settle, and is incapable of subsisting long without change: that it is not a stationary point, but merely transitory and progressive, and is but a stage or resting place, if that which I have described as constantly progressive can obtain the name of rest at all, between the original state of total disconnexion, from which they started, and either a return to that total separation again, or that which I consider as the more probable term of its progress, even on the first approach of that evil, but is ultimately certain, I mean perfect and entire consolidation and union.

I profess myself so strongly impressed with this view, I will not say of the philosophical principle, but of history and experience applicable to the subject we are considering, that I cannot help looking to the union of Great Britain and Ireland, not merely as an advantageous and desirable event, and on that account likely to bring itself about, but as certain and unavoidable, although I shall take care not to commit my philosophy too rashly, by assigning any particular period, whether long or short, for the accomplishment of its predictions. I assert only that we are travelling that road. These two countries are visibly approaching each other by an irresistible attraction, by a species of gravitation which I consider as an invincible law of political nature, if nature can have such an epithet; and that closing, as it were, by the compulsion of this power, no human obstruction, no counterpoise that can be opposed to it, will long avail to keep them asunder, though it may retard their meeting for awhile. I am not less persuaded that when once they are in

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contact, another principle, equally inherent in that new condition, I mean a principle of inseparable adhesion and tenacity, will hold them together, and will so cement and consolidate their union, as to render all human efforts to separate and tear them again asunder, vain and ineffectual. If these opinions then have any foundation, we may debate here concerning the best means of accelerating this happy and much to be desired event, but we may consider the event itself as predestined; and I cannot help persuading myself that the species of destiny, of which I am here speaking, I mean the steady operation of fixed principles, will work out its own degrees, be the process longer or shorter; and neither that erroneous pride, which is supposed to pervade Ireland in general, nor the love of political monopoly, which may actuate particular classes or individuals of that country; nor the arts, the seductions, or the arms of the French republic, can be long interposed between the cause and its effect, or disturb for ever the appointed order of human events, by constraining Great Britain and Ireland to endure the afflictions and calamities of separation, or of a condition almost equivalent to it, while they contemplate all the blessings of union, placed within their reach, and courting their acceptance.

With this view of the necessity and inevitable nature of this event, the opinion I entertain of its utility is at least consoling to my own mind. Yet I should neither have hazarded such speculations, nor have presumed to detain your lordships, especially so long, with this sort of reasoning, if I had thought it no better than idle and visionary theory. But, in truth, I was conscious that it was history rather than speculation that I was delivering throughout, and I will venture to say there is hardly a point or turn in this speculative course, which you will not find verified, chapter for chapter, by the history of every connexion we have hitherto known with the nations which now compose our empire.

Your lordships will think me disposed to carry you far back, when I venture even to name the Saxon heptarchy, and the union of those seven independent kingdoms in the reign of Egbert. Yet if I do little more than allude to that signal event, it is not because I am wanting, or that I can think your lordships so, in a due sense of its importance and dignity, or of its influence on the subsequent destinies either of England or of the world. It is enough to say that the union of the heptarchy was the birth-day of nothing less than this very kingdom of England, and that the glorious empire which now extends from east to west, and has planted the dominion and the language of England around the globe, is the lineal descendant, or rather only the natural growth and developement of that event. It is not my intention, however, to dwell on this antient and parent union, for the purpose of illustrating the principles of which I have just treated. I am sensible that this period is too remote from our own to build any solid conclusion on transactions, with the details and particulars of which we are so little acquainted. I therefore mention it only that I may be entitled to read a short passage from Mr. Hume's history of that period, which, I think, may furnish a reflection or two not impertinent to the present question:—"The kingdoms of the heptarchy, though united by so recent a conquest, seemed to be so strongly cemented into one state under Egbert; and the inhabitants of the several provinces had lost all desire of revolting from that conqueror, or of restoring their independent governments. Their language was every where nearly the same; their customs, laws, institutions, civil and religious: and as the race of their ancient kings was totally extinct in all their subjected states, the people readily transferred their allegiance to a prince who seemed to merit it, by the splendor of his victories, the vigour of his administration, and the superior nobility of his birth. A union also in government opened to them the agreeable prospect of future tranquillity; and it appeared more probable, that they would thenceforth become terrible to their neighbours, than be exposed to their inroads and devastations." We collect from this passage, not merely as an opinion of Mr. Hume's, but as an historical fact, that the local attachment and national feeling which the inhabitants of the several independent kingdoms before their union entertained, no doubt, towards their respective countries, were easily and quickly extended to the whole united kingdom. This change did not even wait for a new generation, but was operated in the very life of the conqueror, and therefore of those who were themselves habituated to the narrower feeling, and who had experienced in their own persons the

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humiliation and resentment belonging to defeat. For it is also remarkable that the harmonizing property of union was manifested in circumstances the most adverse of any to conciliation, I mean in the case of a union brought about by force, and attended with all the irritation of compulsion and conquest. We must observe, in the next place, that Mr. Hume considers a similarity of language, customs, laws, and institutions, civil and religious, as circumstances favourable, not only to the establishment of union, but to the improvement and promotion of its beneficial consequences. And lastly, we have the authority of this profound and philosophical historian for thinking that such a union was likely not only to yield the comforts of internal tranquillity and peace, but so to improve the power and resources of the kingdom, as, instead of trembling at the approach of every invader, to render it rather itself an object of terror, or at least, of respect to surrounding nations. It is true that the Danish invasions followed immediately on this event, and we know that the repeated and powerful descents of that warlike nation, not only harassed and alarmed this island upwards of a century, but at some periods reduced the Saxon power to the greatest possible streights. But in the first place, the Danish invasions were not the consequence of the union of the Heptarchy, and must have happened without it. And in the next place, it is impossible to read the history of that period without perceiving, in every page, a demonstration of the salutary effects of that measure, and without ascribing to the union under Egbert, alone, the ultimate preservation of that kingdom. If the Danes had found the island in the same feeble and divided state, in which the Saxons had themselves achieved the conquest of the Britons; if they had had to contend only with the disjointed, disunited, and single exertions of the seven insignificant states of the heptarchy each in its turn, and if those princes who fought for England had not been enabled by the union to oppose to this powerful and persevering enemy a combined and concerted defence, it is manifest that neither the valour and talents of Egbert, nor the almost romantic endowments and virtues of Alfred the Great would have availed to prevent a conquest as complete, and an extirpation of the Saxon power and name out of England, as perfect and dreadful as that which they had themselves inflicted on the defenceless and divided Britons. But to pass forward to times somewhat nearer our own, I would now speak of Wales.

Wales had resisted the power of all the Saxon kings, and the first princes of the Norman line. It was not till the reign of Henry 3rd, and then rather by the effect of internal dissension, than by the arms or enterprise of that prince, that Wales was brought under a sort of feudal dependance on the crown of England, and acknowledged the sovereign of the latter country as a feudal superior. Wales was held, then, during that reign merely as a fief, with the usual acknowledgements, and under the usual conditions belonging to the feudal relation of seignory and vassalage, but without any claim on the part of England to political sovereignty. This slender relation seems, however, to have improved itself very rapidly into a connexion of a different and much more intimate nature, for in the very next reign, Edward 1st, the immediate successor of Henry 3rd, was able to convert that feudal seignory into direct and positive sovereignty, and to annex the principality of Wales inseparably and as part of the dominion of the crown to the throne of England. At the same period, and, indeed, on that occasion, a partial communication, and but a partial one, of the laws and police of England was made to Wales, by the *Statum Walliæ*, as it is called, in the twelfth year of the reign of Edward 1st. I mention these particulars only to observe, that at this period commenced an æra of connexion between England and Wales, not, indeed, precisely the same in all points, but bearing, however, some resemblance and analogy to that which we are principally condering to-day. I mean an imperfect, political connexion, which consisted in the two countries being governed by the same prince, with a partial uniformity of laws and institutions, remaining distinct and separate in other respects.

If we would appreciate the value of such a connexion, and its efficacy in producing either internal tranquillity, or external peace, we have only to pursue the history of that connexion, throughout the whole period of its duration, from the reign of Edward 1st to that of Henry 8th. It is by no means my intention to interrupt this debate by such a narrative, but, merely to direct your lordships' attention to the result of such an inquiry. For your lordships know that Wales was not

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only disquieted within, by the troubles and turbulence of civil disorder, but that both countries were afflicted by a perpetual succession of mutual inroads and petty warfare, not, perhaps, of sufficient dignity to attract the notice of general history, but sufficient to keep them both exposed to the frequent calamities, and the constant anxiety attending a state of permanent hostility with a neighbouring enemy, and by these means retard and interrupt on both sides of the border, but especially in Wales, the progress of civilization, of arts, of industry, of wealth, and in a word, of public improvement in all its branches. But this was a state of things which, as I have said, could not last for ever, and the only perfect and sovereign remedy for such disorders, was at length administered in the reign of Henry 8th by that incorporating legislative union which extinguished in a day the discord of ages, and identified for ever these two, not only distinct, but hostile nations. In our inquiry then concerning the comparative advantages or disadvantages of these two modes of relation—I mean that imperfect one which proposes to combine connexion with distinctness, and that perfect legislative union which confounds and incorporates both the nations and their governments, we have only to compare, or rather to contrast, the uneasy and afflicting period which preceded the union in the reign of Henry 8th with the two centuries of mutual security and peace, and of progressive and still increasing prosperity and happiness, power, splendor and dignity, which have succeeded, and as it is reasonable to conclude, have derived, in a great degree, if not principally, from that event.

England felt very early the advantage of connexion with *Scotland*; and projects for uniting them even on the best principle of union, were set on foot, and repeated in various forms, and on the slightest prospect of success, from the earliest period down to the very latest, that is to say, to the actual accomplishment of that salutary design. But such purposes, wise and beneficial as they are, must, it seems, mature themselves in the fulness of it; and although it is ordained that these events shall happen, they must happen, it would seem, in their due and appointed order. It will be found, I believe, that neighbouring nations will seldom begin with union, though they are sure to end with it. The work of connexion commenced, then also, in this case, at the natural beginning of the process, and conquest was resorted to as the instrument of union. This part of the Scotch course, however, was never achieved. Scotland never was conquered. But the attempt, and all the miseries attending that long and obstinate struggle deluged both countries in blood, and during more than three centuries afflicted them with calamities, the amount of which on either side, historians can hardly report faithfully, without the charge of exaggeration. This sanguinary and ruinous contest terminated in the union of the crowns, at the accession of James 1st; and here commenced a century of that precise relation which is the subject of our present inquiry. The two kingdoms had one prince, and one executive power, with separate parliaments. Scotland asserted a perfect independence and equality, but experienced a real subordination. It would, undoubtedly, be unfair, if I were to impute to this cause alone, the many disadvantages under which Scotland appears to have laboured, and the declining condition of that country which is observed by historians during the period I have mentioned. Much of the calamity which fell upon both kingdoms, must be placed to the account of the troubles and civil wars in which every part of the island partook during a great proportion of the last century, and which, amongst other extraordinary events produced, under the commonwealth, a hasty and short lived, because ill digested and ill conceived, union of the three kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland. But with all these allowances, it is not the less true, that the last century was a period of great political discord and dissension between England and Scotland, in which the latter country entertained and manifested, as we have been led to expect, that angry and querulous temper which I have described as growing out of the situation, and as inseparable from that jarring and abhorrent union of nominal independence and real subordination. This cause produced its natural effects, and both disturbed the empire in peace, and weakened it in war, sometimes by political contention between the people of Scotland and the monarch, sometimes by the habitual animosity of the two countries, hardly kept under by the authority or mediation of the common sovereign, sometimes by the intrigues of

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Scotland with France, and above all, by the pursuit of the idol independence, to the very brink of separation. The very unity of the crowns became a grievance; and your lordships know, that towards the close of this period, I mean in the first years of the reign of queen Anne and of the present century, partly by projects for abridging the prerogative, because it was administered out of Scotland, partly by projects for usurping a considerable portion of the regal power, in order that it might be administered within Scotland; partly, in fine, by refusing to accede to the settlement of the succession adopted in England, the parliament of Scotland, the patriots of Scotland, with the acclamation of the whole people of Scotland, brought the danger of impending separation so home to the sense and bosoms of both countries, that their prudence was at length alarmed: they opened their arms to each other, and took shelter from imminent and incurable ruin, in that inseparable embrace which has ever since, and I trust ever will, continue to unite us. It is thus that extremes touch, and thus that these two nations, from the last term of alienation and repugnance, passed at a single step, into the closest and most indissoluble union.

The connexion between England and Ireland began in conquest, and the relation was that of sovereign and subject. I do not say a sovereign able, at all times, to enforce his dominion, or a submissive subject acknowledging and acquiescing under the authority of his master. But whatever connexion subsisted between the two countries, had that origin and preserved that character through its first period. This first and intolerable stage of national relation passed forward, however, and softened itself gradually, but through the sanguinary process of habitual resistance and insubordination, swelling occasionally into civil wars and rebellions of the most ferocious character, into a dependent connexion, or a mitigated but avowed dependence of Ireland on England. I allude now to that period during which the Irish nation, with a parliament of their own, were, however, subject to the legislature of England. I do not speak of the *right*, nor wish to engage in that already obsolete, though recent controversy. I speak only of the fact, for such was the constitution, *de facto*, of English and Irish connexion, in the memory of the youngest of your lordships. The second period, also, passed away, and the present improved state of Irish independence, as it now subsists, was achieved by means, which I have already had occasion to allude to; I mean by the opportune exertion of Irish energy in moments of British debility and distress. For those concessions were certainly granted in circumstances of duress, whether they may now, with better grace be stated to have flowed from the justice and liberal disposition of the conceding country, or not. In the mean while we have arrived, in the due and regular course, at that precise point of connexion, which has been the principal object of discussion. We have a common prince, with separate parliaments Ireland claims a sovereign independent government, and that claim is freely admitted by our own: while we exercise, nevertheless, with the acquiescence of Ireland, an open ascendancy and control in every one of its concerns. We are at this moment, therefore, making an experiment which is not yet twenty years old, of the mutual advantages to be derived from that mode of connexion, of its efficacy in strengthening the empire, in repelling danger from without, in reconciling the minds and affections of the nations within, and, finally, in cementing and perpetuating their union. We must, indeed, regard the present moment as the first, in which the course of events has furnished the proper ordeal of this condition; I mean a crisis of danger and difficulty and danger to the empire; for this is the true touchstone on which the virtue of connexion and of mutual engagements may be proved. Surely my lords, at this period of the argument, I may claim the benefit of facts of which we are ourselves the living witnesses, and appeal at once to the disastrous testimony of the present hour, not only for the inadequacy of such a system to yield protection and support in the period of difficulty, but for its active and fatal efficacy in augmenting the danger and hastening the common ruin. Can we need better proof than every tide has of late brought us, that the present feeble and flimsy bond which connects Great Britain with Ireland, does not possess one principle of stability, and has not stamina to resist that innate tendency to decay and dissolution, which accompanies all life from the cradle, whether natural or politic. What result, then, is it reasonable to look for from this experiment? I should wish to speak on this occasion, not merely with

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respect; but, I must say, with gratitude and reverence, of the conduct held by that which we must call the Irish nation, and which is, indeed, entitled to that appellation—I mean the Irish government, the Irish parliament, a great portion of the property of Ireland, of its gentry, and even of its people. In these we have witnessed exertions of courage, activity, perseverance, and spirit, as well as of fidelity and honour, in fulfilling the engagements of their connexion with us, and in the protection and defence of their own country, which challenge the thanks of Great Britain and the approbation of the world. But this sentiment cannot either conceal from us, or disguise other truths, not less obvious, though less grateful and welcome. The loyalty, the prudence, and spirit, which we commend, on one hand, do not, however, prevent an extensive and desperate conspiracy, on the other, against the common safety of Great Britain and Ireland, and aiming above all, avowedly and distinctly against that connexion, in which the safety of both is felt to reside. After hearing his majesty's lawful exercise of the powers with which the constitution of Ireland has invested him, and the legitimate means employed by the sovereign of that country to preserve a uniformity of measures in the direction of our common interests, treated as the interference of a foreign power, we have the misfortune of seeing at this hour a great portion of the Irish people, considerable for its numbers, and, I fear, not altogether contemptible, even for its blood and talents, in open rebellion against our common sovereign, and in close alliance with our common enemy. The dissolution of all connexion between us is the object they profess. The grievance which they have risen to redress is that connexion; the cause which their manifestos proclaim, the standard under which they muster and fight, is separation. This end then, towards which we have seen such connexions, are continually prone, this very separation, which is the natural inborn propensity of imperfect relation, is already, in this case, the subject of a civil war, and is at this moment committed to the issue of arms, which is still depending. I have glanced, in this manner, the history of British and Irish connexion only to show, that amongst its many other evils, that of tendency to total extinction, which we have been taught by principle, and by the example of other countries, to expect, is proved in fact, and in the actual case, to be one of its properties: and I am hardly apprehensive of a dissenting voice to the conclusion which appears to me to result from this deduction, whether of history or reason, that we have reached the point at which, in the first place, the evils of imperfect connexion are at their height, and in the next, beyond which lies only that alternative, so often mentioned, of separation or union. We stand precisely in that predicament, in which the prudence of both countries, and the fidelity and honour of those who are entrusted with their interests, I mean their governments and legislatures, are called upon by the most solemn and instant appeal, I mean the peril of their countries, to snatch them from that precipice, on the very edge of which they stand, already wavering, and too giddy to save themselves. It cannot, surely, be a difficult or a doubtful question, whether we should fold our arms, and look on upon this danger, and the certain ruin in which it ends, or follow that secure and already trodden path which has already conducted two other countries, now identified with England, I mean Wales and Scotland, to more than safety. We have surely learnt from both those examples, that the measure adopted by them, not only affords a perfect remedy against the evils with which we are now contending, but possesses precisely the opposite property from that which is the character of our present imperfect, ill constructed connexion: namely, that of tending to a constant and certain improvement and perfection, instead of diminution and deterioration of union and all its beneficial fruits.

Having hitherto treated the question somewhat speculatively, I would now speak more particularly to the practical inducements which should recommend this measure to both countries; and first, to Great Britain. The advantages to be derived to Great Britain from an incorporating union with Ireland may be divided into positive and negative. By positive, I mean an accession of real and efficient force to our present empire, as a naval and military power; for were all cause of difference between the countries extinguished, and were the affections of the whole of Ireland as sincerely directed towards the general service of the empire, and its force as disposable for that purpose, as may be said of every part of Great

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Britain, it cannot be doubted that the power and resources of that empire would receive an essential augmentation and improvement. But I would rather pass on to that class of advantage which I have called negative, and which appears to me the most material of the two. By the negative advantage of union, I mean that of avoiding, in moments of war and difficulty, those embarrassments which have never failed to distract and annoy us as often, at least of late years, as war and difficulty have occurred, and which render Ireland, at this moment, instead of a resource, only a dead weight hung round the neck of British exertion, at a time when the full energy of both might be well employed against the common enemy. The case is such, that we have not only to contend with this difficulty in our contest with France, but it must, I think, be an improvident and sanguine view of our own affairs, and of the general events in Europe, to consider even the preservation of Ireland, I mean her preservation to the paternal government of his majesty, and the countenance of any connexion between us, as a matter which is not become, in some degree or other, problematical and precarious. I would by no means be understood to speak despondently on that subject; I am far from feeling so. I speak only of danger and doubt, as exciting a prudent exertion to counteract them, not of a mean or unprofitable fear. No man in England can repose a more entire confidence in the vigilance, the skill and the divine valour of the British navy than myself. I profess an equal reliance on the courage and discipline of British troops, endowed as I have always thought them with higher excellence than those of any other nation in the world. I have a firm confidence also in the spirit and bravery of the Irish nation, and in the honour and fidelity of that part of it which professes attachment to our empire, and to our mutual connexion; but with all these grounds of rational hope and expectation, there are two points in which I cannot feel the same implicit confidence, on each of which, however, our ultimate security, and the issue of this contest must depend. I cannot rely confidently on the constancy of fortune in war; nor on the steadiness and uniformity of any national sentiment whatever. I do not know why there is a rebellion in Ireland at all. I have never heard any adequate cause assigned for it. Such pretences as have been resorted to for justifying it, have either been posterior to the events of which they are alleged to have been the causes; or utterly irreconcileable with the avowed objects of the rebellion. Who for example will believe those men sincere who would ascribe their insurrection to the religious differences between two sects of Christians, while they propose to redress that grievance, by a remedy, the success of which must eradicate from their country, or subject to a furious and fanatic persecution, the profession of Christianity itself? I have never, I say, heard any distinct grievance articulated, which would not be enhanced a thousand fold, by the most perfect success that can be proposed in the acknowledged objects of this absurd rebellion. Not knowing then the principle of the present troubles in Ireland, I have no rule for measuring their extent, or for limiting their progress, and I cannot say with confidence, whether any part of the Irish nation, or at least the greater and predominant part, will at some future period even profess adherence to British connexion; neither am I endowed with the means of predicting positively the event of another enterprise against Ireland, if the enemy should attempt it in more favourable circumstances. I repeat it, my lords, I do not despond on this view of the danger; I say on the contrary that the proper means are sure to repel it. I speak only of the danger as of a motive for exerting both wisdom and courage in opposing it. In that view I am constrained to acknowledge doubt, and doubt on such a question cannot be divested of anxiety, nor separated from a duty to aim at the attainment of better security for objects of such unappreciable value. I do not say Ireland must be lost if we have not a union, but I cannot say less than this, that we have no security for the preservation of Ireland, if we do not draw the bonds of our connexion much closer, and that without delay. With such apprehensions it cannot be unseasonable to contemplate a little more closely, the consequences of a total separation from Ireland, and of the necessary attendant, at least, in the present moment, on such a rupture, I mean her immediate alliance with the French Republic. Momentous as these consequences are, I shall pass rapidly over them, because they are too obvious, and their importance too sensible, to require, or, perhaps admit of amplification.

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An Irish democratic republic, or rather anarchy, must be the first and instant consequence of our separation. Let any man, then, attached to the British constitution; let any one who is fond of order and security in society, or even afraid of the extremes of disorder; let any one who would shrink from universal plunder, confiscation, and murder, with all the nameless miseries, wretchedness and guilt, which are but the particulars of that aggregate called anarchy; let any man, I say, who has either the slightest concern for the human race and its happiness, a spark of love for his country, or even a common and vulgar solicitude for his own, or his children's security, reflect for a moment on the triumphant establishment of a democratic anarchy in Ireland. It is not enough to say *proximus ardet;* it is part of our own tenement which is in flames, and we come in absolute contact with this pestilent contagion. Let us, I say, consider soberly, if you please, but deeply and seriously, how much this danger would be increased by such an event, and what the nature of the danger is. I will not insist on this topic; it might lead me too far. But I shall pass to consequences of another sort.

Let us consider, for example, what would be the situation of the western coasts of this island, from the Land's-end to the Hebrides. Let us ask Cornwall, Devonshire, Bristol, Wales, Liverpool, Lancashire, Glasgow: let us ask those whose houses now stand on the margin of the Irish channel, whose lawns and gardens are washed by that sea which now separates them only from friends; let us ask those manufacturing coasts and countries, and those great trading cities which I have enumerated, and which now draw wealth and profit, without danger, from that channel, what their condition and that of their country will be, when they stand within hail of a powerful and savage enemy, which the darkness of a single night can bring to their chamber doors? At present the British commerce and the British navy pass freely through this channel, with friendly ports and coasts on either side, as if it were an inland navigation; while the ships of the enemy cannot approach, nor entangle themselves either for war or trade, with this maritime pass. But after such a change, when Ireland is hostile, and in the hands of an enemy, let those who direct our naval affairs, and who I will take this opportunity of saying it, do so with so much honour to themselves, and so much solid advantage, as well as glory, to their country; let those who are best acquainted with our maritime situation, declare, what new exertion of vigilance will be required, what additional number of ships and of seamen must be retained from offensive war, and must abandon the ocean to protect the coasts of Great Britain against those of Ireland, and to watch the ports of the latter country in its whole circumference. Let us reflect on the advantage lost to the British navy and its operations, by exclusion from Cork, and from the southern and western harbours of Ireland; let that disadvantage be only doubled by adding our loss to the gain of the enemy, when they have all the ports and bays of Ireland at their disposal or in their occupation. How many squadrons more must we employ to tend at once the armaments of Brest and L'Orient and those of Ireland? What will be the situation of our channel and our western trade, when enemies cruizers issue from and shelter in France to the southward, and Ireland to the northward, and far to the westward of the entrance of our channel? The victualling board will tell us how the navy will be supplied, when Cork is shut against us, and victuals only the Brest squadrons. When the ports of Ireland are all French, will it be equally impossible to transport troops from France, as when those troops were to fight their way on shore, and the ships, which transported and convoyed them were to fight their way back to France? When a French and Irish army, receiving their orders from the French Directory, are at Belfast, and ready to embark within three hours sail of the British coast, will invasion be as chimerical and visionary as it now is from France to the southern counties of England? Will, in fine, internal discontent, or speculative error, or the secret machinations of French corruption and English treason, or will popular hope in the first sweets of disorder and anarchy have less, or will they not have much more heart and confidence when with the example of a successful rebellion, they have also the support of neighbouring armies to encourage them?

These are some, far from all, it would be difficult to enumerate thus suddenly all the consequences of Irish separation from Great Britain, and connexion with France, as it would affect ourselves. I am far from saying, I will never admit that even

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these accumulated difficulties would prove too many for the hitherto unmatched powers of British energy or wisdom. But I say the change would be great, the danger as yet untried, and the issue more doubtful than our prudence as Englishmen, and much more, our duty as entrusted with the interest of our country, should permit us to expose it to, if the trial can be averted by any honourable means. It appears to me the greatest peril to which the British empire, whether we consider its power and greatness without, or its security, freedom, and independence within, ever was or can be exposed. On the question, therefore, as it regards Great Britain, I have no hesitation in assenting to the measure, and concurring in this address.

This consideration might, perhaps, be thought in strictness sufficient for the attention of this parliament, since the parliament of Ireland is no doubt competent to deliberate and decide on all that regards the interest of Ireland in this question. No man is less disposed than I am, to controvert the concurrent competence of the Irish parliament to deliberate, and its exclusive competence to decide the question as it regards Ireland. I must, nevertheless, think the interest of Ireland in this measure, a very material point in the deliberation of the British parliament also. For although an entire union with that country appears to be desirable on a separate view of British interest; yet it would in my opinion, cease to be so, if it were not advantageous to Ireland also. The benefit must be mutual in this mutual transaction, in order to be enjoyed by either. The evils attending separation would not be removed, but, on the contrary, would, in my judgment, be much enhanced, by any measure which should unite us at the expense, or to the essential prejudice of either. If sincere and cordial harmony is not the fruit of union; if identity in constitution is not founded on identity of interest, and is not followed by identity of sentiment and feeling towards the united empire, such a union will not cure the evils of imperfect relation, or even separation, but may bring some of them nearer and more home to both, and will produce but few of those advantages which I consider as the true inducements to that measure. I claim it, therefore, as an English question, to inquire whether union with Great Britain will be beneficial to Ireland; and I should propose to pursue that inquiry, not for the purpose of instructing Ireland in her own interests or duties, but for that of informing ourselves of the interest of our own country in this measure, and resting the judgment of the British parliament, if it should be favourable to it, on the only solid and secure basis, of mutual and reciprocal advantage.

I am, therefore, to consider the consequences which would result to Ireland, from that situation of which I have already described some of the consequences to England—I mean a total separation from Great Britain, and alliance with the French republic. I have already assumed as the first fruit of this event, or probably as either preceding or accompanying it, the abolition, in all its parts, of the present constitution of Ireland, the zealous attachment to which is opposed to all the advantages of union, and the establishment on its ruins, of an Irish republic on the French model. This change, and all the complicated calamity it bears *in gremio*, I consider as more fatal than all the rest to the happiness of Ireland; but I will rather postpone its consideration for a moment, and advert to the other less important, indeed, but yet serious effects of such a revolution. It implies, then, in the first place, a state of open hostility to England: and this warfare must, in all probability, partake of the nature of civil war. For it cannot be imagined, that Ireland should be unanimous in surrendering a free government and embracing French chains; nor in preferring that abhorred compound of guilt and madness, of infamy and ruin, to the blessings of religion, law, honour, security, and genuine freedom; nor is it imaginable that Ireland will be unanimous in rejecting British connexion for the purpose of fraternizing with France. The event which I have supposed, I have supposed to be the issue of war, in which one party in Ireland, now the strongest, and, I trust, the most numerous, has been subdued. But submission to force does not change the mind; and were such a calamity to befall Ireland, the new Irish Directory will find that the armies of England, when employed in the rescue of Ireland from that slavery, will be seconded by a great and powerful portion of their subjects. Ireland, then, is doomed, in this event, to foreign and internal war, with all its complicated miseries, of which the bitterness is, indeed, yet on the palate of that

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unhappy country. I have already spoken of the disadvantages to which even England would be subjected from the hostility of Ireland. It is manifest that the country which is the least powerful on shore, and is null at sea, must labour under the same disadvantage multiplied in an infinite degree. A French army in Ireland is the natural consequence of this state of things: if that army is weak, it cannot protect them; if it is strong and adequate to the objects of France in sending it, as assuredly it will be, Ireland becomes a miserable province of France. But Ireland, as a separate state, must alone provide for all the imperial establishments to which she now contributes but a part. Ireland must have an army all her own, and she will find she must subsidize her allied army, not by treaty only, but by requisition and contribution, and every other form of exaction and extortion, limited by the modesty of the French Directors, their generals, and all their subordinate officers of plunder. They must have fortified towns, and all the establishments of that costly branch of defence. They must have a navy, build ships, maintain arsenals and dock-yards, supply their navy with stores and provisions, and they must man and pay their fleets, all from their own funds and resources. Have the economists of Ireland computed the price of these imperial honours, if, indeed, they can be borne at all? But let them consider whether the insulated trade and wealth of Ireland will furnish either men or money for such demands, even after the people should have so far belied all the experience which the world has had of them, by submitting with perfect obedience to the utmost exactions that can be laid upon them. It would, after all, be worthy of a moment's reflexion, whether, if Ireland should not suddenly accomplish that which France, Spain, and Holland, seconded by an armed neutrality of the maritime powers of the North; that is to say, what the whole naval world have tried in vain—I mean should not suddenly acquire a superiority at sea over Great Britain, whether her commerce and every hope which her insular situation could suggest or realize, must not be held by sufferance, and at the mercy of that powerful and offended neighbour, to whom nature had allied her, but whose generous offer of an equal and honourable participation in power, prosperity and happiness she had rejected with insult, as if it had been an injury. Ireland will, no doubt, not expect, after her separation from England, and alliance with our enemies, to partake freely in our East India or our colonial trade; nor will she expect of England in those circumstances, the great and liberal sacrifices which she now makes to the support and promotion of Irish industry, with the amount and particulars of which a noble lord has just made us acquainted: sacrifices which, however liberal in their extent, and however beneficial to Ireland in their effect, I consider only as a natural indulgence of fraternal affection, as well as a wise exertion of imperial policy, while we are united; but which must of necessity expire with our connexion. Will the trade of France, or the share of it to which they would be admitted, and the conditions of its tenure, compensate this loss? Will restraints and prohibitions on the commercial intercourse between England and Ireland be no loss to the latter country? The papers on your lordships' table will instruct us on that point.

The considerations which I have already enumerated are of no light or trivial import; but I must now set before the eyes of Irish gentlemen, one inseparable consequence of such a revolution, and one of which they are no doubt aware—I mean the expulsion and confiscation, not to say the blood of those who now support their antient connexion with England; and whom the case I have stated supposes to have been defeated. But will confiscation and murder go no deeper even than this? In the savage triumph of democratical anarchy, will not every friend to the established constitution of Ireland, to the authority of law, or even to the moral restraints of virtue and religion; will not every one who is guilty of that unpardonable irremissible crime, the possession of property, real or personable, great or small; will not, in a word, all those whose situation seems to offer either a lure, or a curb to violence, be involved in that undistinguishing massacre and pillage which sweeps the way before, and bears up the train of such revolutions? I must, indeed, put it, my lords, seriously and earnestly, not as a topic of declamation, or false and artificial feeling, but as furnishing the soundest argument, and exciting the warmest solicitude, to the property, and I may say to the industry, and to the virtue of Ireland, without distinction of degree, or of religious persuasion, what

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would be the consequence of a complete victory obtained by France in Ireland, what would be the inevitable consequence of delivering Ireland, with all her political, religious, and civil interests, over to the discretion of that description of Irishmen who would then become their masters, and of that description of anarchy which must follow such events as I have described —I choose rather to hint at than to dwell on such topics. They are, indeed, fitter for the private meditation of those who are concerned in them, than for a public discussion or rhetorical amplification. I am content with having stated shortly and dispassionately the nature and degree of some of those dangers which may induce England to consent to union, but which seem to command Ireland, with the authority of urgent and instant necessity, to seek without delay, the refuge which this measure presents to her.

It is impossible to overlook some circumstances in the internal and political condition of Ireland, which bear as powerfully on the question of union, and seem to recommend that measure to the people of Ireland, as strongly for the purposes of equal government, and of civil and municipal happiness, as on any other grounds whatever. Ireland is a divided country, but unequally divided as to property and numbers; the least numerous class possessing the property and the power; but the most numerous, entertaining, and, indeed, cherishing fondly, and tenaciously, claims on both —I mean both on the property and the power. I need not detain your lordships by describing the extent or the violence of those passions which inflame and exasperate both parts of the Irish nation against each other. Every one knows the firm and immoveable basis on which their mutual hatred stands, the irreconcileable nature of its motives, its bitter, malignant, and implacable character. In this frame and temper of mind, however, towards each other, one of these portions of Ireland claims and exercises what is felt by both, to be a species of dominion over the other. I believe it is hardly too much to say, that there are two nations in Ireland; two Irish peoples; the one sovereign, the other subject. The sovereign class, or cast of Irishmen, claim their sovereignty as of right, and ground it on an old title of conquest, confirmed, as they contend by possession, acquiescence, and prescription. They claim also the federal support of Great Britain in maintaining this dominion, on the solemn grounds of fidelity to implied compact, compensation for sacrifices, and reward for services. They show a close alliance and identity of views between themselves and the English interest in Ireland in all times, and they rely as strongly on recent, and even on present exertions in a common cause, as on the uniform tenor of their ancient services. In a word, they call at once upon our honour and our gratitude, and they support that appeal by a stream and series of facts which we cannot controvert. I must confess that I have always felt this point as constituting a true and proper dilemma—on the one hand, I cannot admit the ascendancy of one part of a nation, over another part of the same nation, to the extent and to the purpose claimed in Ireland, as capable of assuming any character deserving the denomination of right. That which is wrong on one side, cannot, intelligibly to me, become a right in the other. Wrong is not a material out of which it appears possible to construct right; and I do not think the virtues of possession, prescription, or any other limitation of time, which are supposed to cure the vices of a bad title, at all applicable to the case of perpetually subsisting, and, as it were, renovating wrongs, especially such as affect the political rights of great numbers of men. The operation of prescription in confirming titles, even in the private transactions of property, is, indeed, different, I believe, from the common notion that is formed of it Prescription does not cure the original vice of a bad title; but, after all memory of the good title, which had been supplanted by the usurped one, has been lost and buried under the oblivion of time, prescription, that is to say, the lapse of time within which legal memory can survive, determines the expiration of the old title and gives effect, not to the bad one which first superseded it, but to a new title arising out of possession, and consummated in this manner by the completion of prescriptive time. Nothing of this applies to subsisting and continuing wrongs, in which the length of their duration, and the frequency of their repetition, instead of diminishing the injury, must be felt to be a grievous aggravation, and instead of converting wrong into right, seems only to improve and fortify the title of those who suffer, to shake off the injury on the first oppor-

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tunity that offers. If possession then will not constitute this singular right which is claimed in wrong, as between the parties themselves, neither can it be improved by the interests, the engagements, or the obligations of a third party; and I do not see how the *jus tertii*, as it may be called, of England, can affect the relative claims of these two Irish nations, or of these two parts of the Irish nation. On this ground, therefore, and merely on this general and abstract view of the question, I confess I might have thought it difficult to assign a sufficient reason to preclude his majesty, as sovereign of Ireland, from concurring with his Irish parliament, or even from exerting, in every lawful way, his legitimate powers in promoting such measures as might be calculated to place every class of his Irish subjects on an equal footing, as to civil rights, and consolidate these two hostile nations into one peaceable and united family. But in truth your lordships know that nothing can be less rational, nor more dangerous, and often fatal than these abstract views of practical questions, affecting the interests of multitudes and of nations. In the blind pursuit of abstract right, we shall always find ourselves, innocently no doubt, if our intention be considered, but yet too effectually, the instruments of great practical injustice and oppression. I believe there are few cases to which this observation applies more closely, than to that which we are considering. That part of Ireland which we would wish to redress, claim not only political equality in the government of their country, a claim in which I confess I cannot help sympathizing with them; but they are known to entertain, and to nourish yet more fondly and anxiously, though, perhaps, not yet so loudly or distinctly pronounced, claims of a very different nature. We cannot be ignorant that the first application of those rights with which we should be disposed to invest them, is likely to be the perpetration of a great wrong, and that at bottom, that wrong was, perhaps, the true and eventual object of their actual demand, and would be the practical result of its attainment. The Catholics of Ireland not only claim a participation in the civil franchises enjoyed by their Protestant countrymen; but they foster claims on the property of Protestants, the present possession of which they treat as mere usurpation, and these claims are of no trifling extent. We know the aspiring character of their church, or, if you please, of all churches, or of all bodies and descriptions of men. We must, above all, recollect what is, perhaps, more urgent than all the rest, that the Catholics, besides their claims, civil or religious, have passions to gratify, passions long irritated, long restrained, but not on that account the less vehement or dangerous. I have heard such apprehensions treated lightly, as the productions either of imagination or ignorance: and I certainly pretend to no credit on such points, from personal knowledge or inquiry. I should wish therefore to qualify any thing that may appear rash or peremptory, in what I hazard on such a subject, by avowing that degree of diffidence in my own views, which may be thought becoming with regard to facts, which, though attested, I think, satisfactorily by others, have not fallen under my own observation. But with this qualification, I confess that I find it difficult to resist a conclusion to which the general knowledge we may all possess of the human character, applied to such facts as all admit, seems to lead us. I must, therefore, profess a strong impression, that if to the physical force already possessed by the Catholic body, and which consists in superiority of numbers, were added by any such revolution as that which we are considering, the advantages of political power, and the weight and influence which belong to the authority of government and legislation, some danger might accrue to the property, the establishment, and even the personal security of the Protestants in Ireland; and with this apprehension on our own minds, the alarm expressed by those who are so deeply interested in the consequences of such measures, seems entitled to our serious and earnest attention.

I am not more clear, therefore, in thinking the Catholics entitled to a fair participation in the civil and political franchises of Irishmen, than I am in feeling, that the Protestants ought to be protected and defended in the security of their property, their religion, and their persons, against every violence which the Catholics might be disposed to attempt, when they have passed from their present state of subjection to that of authority and power. The dilemma, therefore, has hitherto consisted in this: the Protestants could not be supported in that ascendancy which seems necessary even for their pre-

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tection, without derogating from what may appear to be a natural right of the Catholics. The Catholics could not be supported in their claim of equality, without transferring to them that ascendancy which equality of rights must draw to the larger body, and which from that moment must expose the Protestants to dangers from which they ought to be protected. Such seem to be the practical difficulties in the way of abstract justice, while the government of Ireland continues merely local. An Irish parliament, in which the ascendancy is either Protestant or Catholic, and it cannot choose but lie on one side or the other, may be expected still, I fear, to gore and lacerate their country, by one or other of the horns of this dilemma: and I see no perfect remedy for Irish division, and its lamentable consequences, while these two enraged and implacable opponents are still shut up together, are still inclosed within the very theatre, on the very arena of their ancient and furious contention. I do sincerely think, that this divided and double condition of the Irish people requires something of an *imperial aula*, a legislature founded on a broader and more liberal basis, to administer impartial laws to all, and to reconcile security with justice. While one of these parties must judge the other, in whichever hand the fasces may be placed, I fear there is reason to expect only violence in the suit, and if not in justice, at least slow and imperfect justice in the decree. My mind, I confess, cannot resist the conviction arising out of all these considerations, that the united parliament of Great Britain and Ireland will, in the peculiar circumstances of Ireland, constitute a better legislature, and a more perfect, because a more impartial parliament, for all Ireland, than any representation of a minor part or section of Ireland, in a separate, local parliament ever can. I am persuaded, that laws beneficial to the mass of the people of Ireland, and promoting its general prosperity and happiness, may be expected with greater confidence from the united parliament, in which local partialities, interests, and passions, will not divert the straight and equal current of legislation, than in an Irish parliament, where these stumbling-blocks must for ever bend or impede its course. In the united parliament, right may be done unaccompanied by wrong. Irish Catholics may be invested with their political capacities, without the slightest danger to Protestant establishment or property. These, on the contrary, must acquire a tenfold and hundredfold security in the Protestant parliament, and the genuine Protestant ascendancy of the united kingdom.—The Protestant church and property may, on the other hand, be secured, without perpetuating the present humiliating and degrading exclusion of the Catholic part of the Irish nation. Such are some of the particularities in the condition of Ireland, which appear to me to add, in her case, many powerful inducements to those which, in every other instance, may invite neighbouring and friendly countries to a close and intimate union of their governments.

I confess, that to me these considerations furnish by no means the weakest recommendation of this measure. I look with peculiar satisfaction towards the prospect which it seems to open, I think, in truth, for the first time in the history of Ireland, of doing justice to one part of that nation without injury to the other, and of providing for the general prosperity and happiness, without bringing calamity on any particular part. For I cannot consider the admission of fellow citizens to a participation of common franchises, as an injury to those who happen already to possess them; nor the loss, nor even destitution, of partial and exclusive dominion over fellow subjects as any wrong. The Protestants have a sacred right to their properties, to their religion, and to their own liberties; but the liberties of their Catholic brethren are no part of that property; they have no narrow corporate right, or none that I can wish to support them in, in the government of their countrymen; nor can I see that the subjection of the Catholics must be an article in the charter of Protestant liberties.

If the union, therefore, present a hope of meliorating the condition, and extinguishing the discontents of a great majority of the inhabitants of Ireland, without exposing the rest to danger, but, on the contrary, adding the most substantial securities to all their legitimate rights, I must profess myself on that account, and perhaps I may say principally on that account, a warm friend to the measure; and I am free to confess, that if these were not to be the consequences, I should expect very little advantage from it. I am desirous, therefore, of declaring for myself, that I shall think the union much more perfect, much better adapted to all its

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beneficial ends, and the benefits to be expected from it, in such a case, I think incalculable, if the just claims of the Catholic Irish are provided for by an explicit article of the treaty itself. After having thus declared my own mind, and distinctly pronounced my own judgment on this great leading point, I think it right to add, that if any political peculiarities of the present time should render it impracticable to engross these wholesome provisions in the written treaty itself, I would rather restrain my wishes for the immediate accomplishment of this desirable end, than expose this great transaction to needless and unprofitable hazard, by unseasonable pertinacity or impatience. And I should look with confidence to a period when the object I have mentioned will result as a natural consequence, from the treaty, and when this desirable change will flow, with many other blessings, from the impartiality of the imperial and united legislature.—If I were worthy then of offering to the loyal Catholics of Ireland the advice of an individual, who has no other claim to their attention than that of uniting a spirit of liberal toleration, and a strong favour towards common right as opposed to monopoly, of combining, I say, these sentiments with something of a practicable disposition which would not reject attainable good when a more perfect accomplishment of right is out of reach, I would implore their prudent acquiescence in a measure which must ultimately consolidate their interests with those of their country; which will bring, in its season, relief to the Catholics and security to the Protestants of Ireland; which will improve the wealth, the prosperity, the dignity, the manners, and the public and private happiness of their country; and which, conferring these blessings with one hand, will avert with the other the certain ruin, desolation, and slavery, which are at this moment impending over their native land.

I wish to guard against one misinterpretation. When I prefer the united parliament to that of Ireland, as at present constituted, I should be much misunderstood, if I were thought to profess a distrust of the wisdom and justice of the Irish parliament in general, or to impute to it the slightest degree of incompetence to the general objects of its legislative duties. I profess, on the contrary, the highest and most unfeigned respect, both for the Irish parliament as a body, and for many of its members, with whom I have indeed little, or I might nearly say, no personal acquaintance, but whose character and talents, as public men, I have contemplated, as others do, with the respect and admiration they justly inspire. What I have hazarded on this subject, the delicacy of which I am not insensible to, amounts only to this: that in one great branch and member of Irish affairs, the present Irish parliament must be considered as a party, and in those concerns a major part of the people must now receive the law from an adverse and rival authority. Whereas, in the united parliament, the Irish members will furnish all the local information, and will possess all the weight and influence which the general affairs and interests of that country require; while those local or partial feelings which might warp the judgment of the best-intentioned Irishmen, on some subjects, might be moderated and temperated by the mediating impartiality of the imperial parliament.

I would now consider one or two general objections, which I have observed to be most prominent in the opposition to this measure, and I shall begin with that which appears to have been the most operative and successful throughout Ireland, and to have had the greatest share in the rejection of this important and salutary proposal—I mean the notion, that a legislative union, however beneficial in its effects, to the interests of Ireland, is, however, in some way, derogatory to the honour and national independence of that country.

The whole of this topic will be found to be an appeal from reason to feeling, and, indeed, from a just and genuine feeling to a blind and inconsiderate one. It is intended, like most of the objections on this question, to preclude the discussion of its merits; and what is peculiar to this particular objection, it is not only intended to elude the merits of the principal question, but seems to disclaim the discussion even of any proper and specific merits of its own: it is used, in truth, to disqualify those to whom it is presented for all deliberation whatever, by exciting the passions, and interposing the flame and dazzle of enthusiasm, between the eye and the object it is to examine. Those who employ this topic, have undoubtedly a considerable advantage; for, in the first place, many more are susceptible of strong and lively feeling, than capable or willing

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to form an enlightened and deliberate judgment on any subject whatever. In the next place, the feeling applied to is in itself by no means unnatural; and so far from being culpable, or a subject of reproach, must, on the contrary, be classed with those affections which are the most beneficial to the world, and the most honourable to those who possess them. It is, in a word, a branch or mode of patriotism, that virtue which embraces the whole range of our public duties, and which is an object of too much respect and veneration, when genuine and well-directed, not to challenge some indulgence even in its errors and delusions. I cannot, however, help suspecting, that those who avoid discussion, are not very firm or confident on the merits; and that passion is seldom exclusively applied to, when reason is on the same side. Enthusiasm is, indeed, in general, to be accounted but an unsafe and unfaithful guide. The guide is himself blind, and I know not how to search for truth with better hope of success, than by the light of such reason as Providence may have bestowed upon us. I should propose, therefore, to follow that course, and to consider dispassionately, even this passion. I would fairly and deliberately inquire, whether a sincere regard for the national dignity of Ireland does, indeed, oppose any solid objection to a legislative union with Great Britain?

I shall waste but little of your lordships time in analyzing the nature and foundation of those local affections towards particular spots, which seem to circumscribe the general benevolence of mankind within the rivers, or seas, or mountains, which encompass that which we call our country. Perhaps that expansive love of our fellow creatures, which has obtained the general name of philanthropy, may have been compressed into narrower bounds, in order to augment its energy in the proper scene of its exertion; perhaps this large and diffuse motive may have been drawn home as it were, and retrenched within limits more commensurate with the size and sphere of human action. But no matter how or why, the love of our country certainly exists; it is the noblest affection of the human breast; and I have no doubt is of divine origin—I am to acknowledge that Ireland, both by its dimensions, its local position, and every other circumstance attending it, offers a fit object for that passion, the ardour of which may well be improved into enthusiasm and zeal, by the many natural charms which, I understand, abound in that country, and by that to which I can, indeed, speak myself—I mean the many generous qualities which distinguish its inhabitants, and seem to endear that nation to those who compose it—I am willing also, to admit, that besides that solicitude for the happiness and well-being of the people who inhabit our country, which is the proper and distinctive feature by which true patriotism is to be recognized, this local affection may also attach a sort of interest, and a certain importance and value, to the separate political existence, or individuality, of that country. That identical space has contained the habitual objects of our regard, and an association may have been established between our local and moral attachment, in such a manner as to render it, perhaps, no easy abstraction, to love the people of Ireland, distinctly from that which may be called the love of Ireland. Nothing of all this need be controverted; nor is it desirable that it should be otherwise—I would only demand a similar assent to some particularities, which I think observable in this passion, and which appear to me to bear in some degree, on the principal question. This local patriotism, then, seems to be limited not only by space, as we have seen, but also with some reference to time. The space to which the affection of patriotism attaches, is that which we have been accustomed to consider as our country, at a given time, that is to say, in our own time, or during our own generation. If it had been larger or smaller at our birth, our love would have expanded or contracted itself accordingly. We have seen a remarkable instance of this expansive property in local patriotism, or in this love of metes and bounds, as related by Mr. Hume, in the passage which I have read from his history of the union of the Heptarchy. We have seen in that example, the inhabitants of the six conquered kingdoms transfer their allegiance to Egbert, and the minute partialities of these six countries, transgress their respective bounds, and in obedience to events, dilate, as by common consent, so as to occupy the whole surface of the united kingdom of England, and accommodate themselves to this change of boundary, with as much rapidity and ease, as the ambition of the monarch himself had done to the growth of his dominions. This happened in the very season of repugnance and dis-

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gust which succeeds to conquest, and a vanquished Mercian or East Angle, ceased, even in his own life, to think himself degraded by being called an Englishman.

The same truth has been evinced in Wales. Those who inhabited that principality in the early part of the reign of Henry 8th, felt their patriotism and national feelings bounded by the mountains of their country, beyond which, indeed, so far from discovering the objects of affection, they found only those of ancient animosity and habitual hostility. The same narrow bounds, however, no longer limit the public spirit and affections of those who have inhabited that part of our island since that memorable and fortunate era in the history of Wales. I believe I may venture to say, that none of your lordships who may have an interest in that country, and that no Welch gentleman, or inhabitant of Wales, would thank a Welch patriot who should propose to restore the dignity and independence of that country, by separating it once more from England; that is to say who should forbid and prohibit every Welchman from presuming to consider himself as entitled to any participation in the affairs, in the enterprizes, in the greatness, consideration, or glory of that empire, of which his country is now a distinguished member.

They would, no doubt, think the dignity of their countrymen strangely provided for by this second extermination: by driving them once more out of England, and cooping them up within the mountains of Wales, as the Saxon conquerors had done by their British ancestors. I shall not easily persuade myself, that a Welch gentleman will think an affront or indignity is put upon himself, or his country, because lord Nelson, for example, can take him by the hand as fellow subject; or because his countryman, Foley (captain Foley, of his majesty's ship Goliah), was enabled by the union of Wales, to lead the British fleet into action on the 1st of August, instead of heading some miserable predatory inroad across the Welch marches.

I may speak with better authority of another country. Those who inhabited Scotland in the reign of king William; those who inhabited that part of Scotland with which I am best acquainted, and who looked from their windows on the hills of Northumberland, at a few miles distance, had their patriotism bounded by their horizon, or rather their eye had a wider range than this large and liberal passion.

It is not so with those who inhabit that country in the reign of George 3rd, and this change, I am persuaded, was operated much sooner than some noble lords seem disposed to allow. A noble lord (Holland) referred, on a former occasion to a proceeding of this House in the year 1713, as furnishing some ground to suppose that the two countries were not soon reconciled to the union. I am by no means disposed to deny, that the transaction alluded to might furnish a very fair argument to be used in debate on this topic. It certainly imported in its literal acceptation, the wish, at least, of some individuals, for a dissolution of the union, being an express motion for that purpose. It was negatived, indeed, by the House; but it was made by one of the sixteen Scotch peers, and supported, generally, though I do not know that it was unanimously, by that body. I have no reason to complain, therefore, of this proceeding being used in argument, to the point for which it was adduced; but I must say, at the same time, that it does not appear to me as conclusive, as I am to presume it did to that noble lord. Your lordships' leisure will not admit of my entering minutely into all the particulars of this proceeding; but I must at least say, that it has by no means made the same impression on my mind, and I am not satisfied that the people of Scotland or of England, or the peerage of Scotland at large, or their representatives in this House who supported this motion, including even the mover of the question himself, were in earnest in desiring the separation of the united kingdoms. I do not think myself bound to believe, merely on the letter of a motion in parliament, any body of men, and especially that enlightened body to which I allude, capable of harbouring a design so absurd, and, if sincere, so wicked and detestable, as that motion imported, while I can find any other motive, or can imagine any other object more rational and less culpable, to account sufficiently for the proceeding. I find then, no difficulty in discovering abundant inducements for this motion, short of the absurd and incredible purpose which it expresses—I observe in the first place, that it was made in the House of Lords, and originated with the sixteen peers of Scotland. The Scotch peerage was undoubtedly the body whose interests

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were least consulted, and who were the worst treated by the union. But they had received fresh cause of complaint subsequent to that event. The abolition of the privy council of Scotland was, in my opinion, necessary to consolidate the union, by removing that remaining nucleus of a local government, and separate interest. But this measure affected, no doubt, the views both of ambition and of vanity, of the Scotch peerage and of the higher order of the gentry, though it very little concerned the people. The discontent of the peerage excited by that measure, had been yet more recently inflamed by the decision of this House in the case of the duke of Hamilton. His patent, as duke of Brandon, had been disallowed, and by that proceeding it seemed decided that a Scotch peer, after the union, should be incapable of receiving the independent dignity of a British peerage; a disability highly injurious to the peerage of Scotland, in its fondest aim, and reasonably offensive and disgusting to that body, already sore with prior provocations. If we consider this motion, then, as no more than the expression of the chagrin of this body; but especially if it be considered as a means employed to give weight in future to their just pretensions, we shall assign as weighty a motive for such a proceeding as has produced many others of great importance in parliament. These grievances were, indeed, expressly stated in the motion, amongst the reasons on which it was grounded. But the special occasion of this transaction was, the extension of the malt tax to Scotland. This tax was, in fact, felt to be oppressive on that country; and it was besides fairly questionable, whether the imposition of this tax, at that particular point of time, was not contrary to an article of the union. This objection applied, indeed, only to that particular period, and ceased afterwards, but it was subject to question at the time. I think on the whole, that the Scotch members of both Houses were justified in standing out on this tax, and I think their union and exertion on that occasion did them honour, though I do not think the mode of opposition they chose judicious; I find, however, in the very occasion which gave rise to this proceeding a sufficient motive, and a much more natural and, indeed, justifiable purpose than that which the motion literally imported. It was intended to enforce the opposition of Scotland to the malt-tax, and to coerce the minister on that point, not by the dissolution of the union, but by the intimidation which the very menace of such a fatal step might be expected to produce. The English peers who supported this motion had themselves been the authors and promoters of the union. But they were the opposition of the day, and it appears, could not deny themselves the satisfaction of using the opportunity which this Scotch question of the malt tax afforded them, of distressing the minister of the day, by the singular and rare union of the representatives of Scotland, even for a few hours, against the court. It lasted, indeed, no longer; and the opposition of the sixteen peers seem to have spent and exhausted itself in this single act, in which I can discern only a general expression of their own particular disgust, and a wish to stand well with their country by opposing the malt-tax. The opposition to that tax, and the attempt at least to modify it, as to Scotland, was the true occasion of this motion, and instead of so absurd and flagitious, but so important and momentous a design as that of dissolving the union, there appears to me to have been nothing deeper in the matter, than the wish on one hand to tease a minister, and on the other to obtain the reduction of three-pence on the bushel of malt, in a tax upon Scotland. I am a good deal confirmed in this view of the transaction, by observing that although this tax was renewed every year, and was objected to by the Scotch members in the House of Commons, I do not find a hint of any new intention to dissolve the union. Various other questions interesting to Scotland were discussed, without producing the slightest intimation of such a design; and I find one, very little posterior to that on which the noble lord has relied, so remarkable, that I cannot help mentioning it. I mean the extraordinary bill, known by the name of the Peerage bill, which actually passed this House in 1719, but was thrown out, as might be expected, in the House of Commons.

Neither the peerage of Scotland, nor the Scotch nation, have ever received, since the union, so signal a provocation as that bill appears to me to have offered to them. It proposed, in direct terms, the complete disfranchisement of the whole body of the Scotch peers, and stripped them even of the elective franchise which the union had left them, without any other

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compensation worthy of notice, than that of seeing such of their representatives as were parties to this spoliation, rewarded by British peerages, which were to make them independent in future, of the favour or resentment of their injured constituents. This measure, as your lordships must see, was, at the same time, the most flagrant violation of the union in some of its most fundamental articles, and could not fail of exciting general disgust, and alarm throughout Scotland, by breaking so wantonly the integrity, and shaking the security of that solemn treaty. The bill was accordingly debated with great warmth, at great length, and I think, with much ability in both Houses of parliament; and I have troubled your lordships with these particulars, for the purpose of observing, that throughout those debates, on a subject sufficiently offensive and irritating to Scotland, there was not dropped from the lips of a single individual, an intimation of any such wish for separation, as had been expressed in the proceeding of the year 1713. A certain proof that such a wish could not be general in either country, and a pretty conclusive argument that it was not professed or entertained by any considerable party or description of men then known in England or Scotland. On this review of the period immediately succeeding the union, I might, without much prejudice to my argument, concede all the noble lord can claim from the motion of 1713, though I am far from making that admission in fact; but if I were to grant that in the year 1713, some indications of indisposition and alienation between the countries remained; that six short years of union had not completely appeased and obliterated the animosities of four centuries, but that six years more had been sufficient for that purpose; that after the lapse of six years from their union, no trace of unkindness was discernible, and, that in twelve years after that union, the strongest provocation had failed in exciting it, I do not think, I say, that for the purpose of the present argument, I shall have made a concession of much value or importance, and with this remark I shall pass forward to times of which I am entitled to speak with the confidence of personal knowledge. I will venture then to assure your lordships, and to speak for my neighbours as well as myself, that at this day, we see without humiliation or regret, those towers and beacons, which were very necessary appendages of our independence, at least before the union of the crowns, when we had a predatory enemy within ten miles of us; we behold, I say, without mortification or concern, those badges of imperial dignity mouldering, and in ruins on our rocks, while we can see the plains below covered with crops, which he who sows is now sure of reaping; and while we can extend our views of national greatness and dignity, and all our public feelings, whether of pride or of affection, not only beyond the little range of hills that we look upon, but to the remotest extremities of the habitable globe, I will venture to declare for my country, that with the exception of those false Scotchmen, whom the enemy has been able to corrupt or to delude, and who, I trust, for the honour of Scotland, are both few and contemptible; but with that exception of the partizans of France, I will venture to pronounce, that there does not at this hour live a Scotchman of any degree or condition, from Berwick to the Orkneys, whose British patriotism would not be more offended, and certainly much more reasonably, by a proposal for separating these kingdoms, than the patriotism of Fletcher, of Saltown, or Lockhart, of Carnwath, could be at the beginning of the century by the proposal for uniting them.

I have dwelt somewhat longer on this topic, than perhaps I ought, principally for the purpose of showing what the nature and value of that object is, for which Ireland has been persuaded to renounce and reject with anger, the greatest and most evident advantages that were ever offered to a nation. It is, in the first place, then, a sentiment, or feeling, which it is difficult to define, and not perhaps easy even to conceive distinctly. In the next place, this sentiment, such as it is, is so limited in duration, and so obsequious to events, that it is not enough to say that it expires. It actually changes sides—and the very sacrifices we would make to it at one period, will, at a subsequent point of time, and from thence ever after, prove as much in contradiction with, and as offensive to this very feeling, as it might be welcome and grateful to it before. What then is this mighty object to which such sacrifices are required? It is an airy unsubstantial sentiment; it is a transient, evanescent, metaphysical point, to which we are called upon to sacrifice not only the substantial, but the permanent and perpetual interests of two great nations,

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I confess I cannot persuade myself to rank a sentiment so subtle, and subject to so many refined and delicate modifications, with that sound and genuine affection, for I can class it only as a subordinate mode of that plain and manly passion, which has deserved, by excellence the style and dignity of patriotism. True patriotism will, I think, be found to rest on the solid basis of some rational and useful principle, which will keep it uniform and uninfluenced by time or circumstance, and which may serve as a criterion to distinguish its own genuine and steady course, from the capricious and irregular motions of some of its many counterfeits. The love of our country may be rational or fantastical as that of any other object; and, I must consider patriotism as partaking sufficiently of the nature of general affection, to acknowledge it for genuine, only when it is evinced by solicitude for the welfare of its object. I fix on this as the distinctive character of sincere affection, whether for our country or for any other object of regard. Public love is founded in utility, and by that mark alone may challenge its descent from heaven. The rest is all spurious, and to be viewed rather with caution than respect. On this clear principle, then, shall we not say, that a true patriot proposes to himself before all things, the prosperity and happiness of those who inhabit his country? He may set a value, if he pleases, on the distinct existence, and individuality of that country; but if his love be well regulated, and all its modes and affections be in due subordination, he will prefer the solid and real happiness of his country to its metaphysical identity. It is to this chaste and disciplined patriotism, that I would appeal on the present question, against the noisy and clamorous pretence which would usurp its seat, and bear away the decision by acclamation and tumult, before a sober and enlightened judgment, founded on the solid basis of public utility, can silence this importunate and delusive feeling. To sum up my argument on this point, in plain, but I think satisfactory terms; if a separate political existence is contrary, nay fatal to the real interests of the people of Ireland; and if a perfect incorporation and union with the British empire, must be productive of security, aggrandizement and happiness to Ireland, such a union should on this single but, decisive ground, be the first wish of every Irish heart.

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But let us yield even this principle for a moment. Let us subscribe to that strange incomprehensible duty which I have heard proclaimed, with a sort of triumph, even in this House, and by which it is required that in a question such as this, the legislature should banish from their thoughts and contemplation every concern for the interests of the nations which they represent, and that the decision of this mighty question should be founded on any thing but its influence on the national advantage or security. Let us admit the insignificance of Irish prosperity and happiness, and the exclusive title of what is called distinctness and dignity, to our solicitude; I still say that even these objects are provided for, by rejecting the present measure: for the choice does not lie between the present condition of Ireland and union. We are not ignorant that the alternative is, according to every moral probability, union or separation; that is to say, union or ruin; union with Great Britain, or slavery to France. If this measure be not adopted, we know that the distinctness of Ireland must expire: that her political extinction must be accomplished; that she must undergo a change a thousand fold more degrading, as well as destructive, and more fatal to her independence and dignity by means which no mistaken patriotism can prefer: I mean by subjection to a foreign conqueror, or at best by a debased and slavish dependance on the general tyrant and task-master of Europe. Instead of preserving her present independence, or acquiring new accession of importance and dignity, by her association with the British empire, Ireland is in danger of dropping into that common sepulchre of nations, which has already buried the very names and memories of so many states and kingdoms, now no more. Will the identity or the dignity of Ireland be preserved, when after being first the dupe and the servile tool of France, she becomes her real and effective slave, under some ridiculous or antiquated nick-name, invented or revived, for the very purpose of obliterating her own?

Let us consider this question in one view more, and setting aside both the real interests of Ireland, and the chances of separation with its attendant calamities, let us only compare the present condition of Ireland in mere dignity, with its future condition, in that single respect, after the union; for we shall find the opposers

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of the union, mistaken in the means of consulting even barren dignity, when they prefer the present situation of Ireland to its incorporation with the British empire. In what does the dignity of a nation truly consist? Is it merely in its *separate*, or in its *independent* existence? If Ireland, from the very nature of things, is and always must, while it is a separate kingdom, remain, in some respects and in some degree, dependent, subordinate, inferior: and the day after its union with Great Britain, becomes altogether independent, sovereign and equal, how is its dignity better assured by the former condition than by the latter? We must inquire then what the present situation of Ireland truly is, in point of independence.

Although I should wish to be perfectly frank and explicit, in pointing out those circumstances of necessary and unavoidable subordination which really exist, I would by no means insist on others, which I have heard enlarged upon; I think, with a false pride on our part, and perhaps with reasonable offence to the national feeling of Irishmen, and which, at the same time, do not appear to me genuine tokens of subordination in any respect. Of this description, I consider the necessity under which Ireland labours of claiming, in times of danger, whether from foreign or domestic enemies, the protection of the British navy, and military, as well as pecuniary aid from this country. I conceive Ireland to have a perfect right to this friendly and brotherly co-operation, on two grounds, which seem to me to preclude altogether, either a mortifying humiliation on one hand, or an offensive pride on the other. First, the preservation of Ireland is an English interest, and is a concern sufficiently precious to call for these exertions, even on a distinct and separate view of our own advantage. In the next place, Ireland is entitled to this support, from an empire to which she is associated, and to the general service and security of which she is herself contributing, cheerfully, and at all times, in every branch of public service. Her seamen, her soldiers, and her revenue all augment the general stock of British resources. And if peculiar and temporary emergencies have, at this, or any other particular period, increased the local demands of Ireland on the exertions of the empire, we must recollect, that the scene of danger may at other times be shifted; and we have no reason to doubt. but, on the contrary, have recent grounds, very honourable to Ireland, for believing that she will be ready to furnish extraordinary exertion, and aid, to repel extraordinary danger on this side of the water, if such occasions should arise.

I must also dissent from another topic which I have heard used, as indicating a national dependence of Ireland on Great Britain. I mean the advantages which she derives from the extensive commerce without, and the prosperous manufactures within, which are supposed to flow, and which I believe, really do flow, in a great part, from a free participation in the imperial greatness of Great Britain, and from encouragements which she might withhold if so advised. Here again, I think, Ireland may accept, I will not say, without gratitude, but without humiliation, as Great Britain ought to bestow without pride. When the question has been stated between entire separation and union, these considerations are very pertinently submitted to the prudence of Ireland, as they have been, with great ability, by the noble lord (lord Auckland) who preceded me; for the advantages alluded to, would, no doubt, be withdrawn with perfect justice, and indeed, by indispensable policy, if all connexion between us were dissolved. But when the question is placed on the footing of the present argument, that is to say, on a view of our present imperial relation, I then feel, that considering the importance of that relation to Great Britain, as well as to Ireland, the communication of these imperial advantages seems to belong to the very nature of the case, and to flow naturally from the sentiment of fraternity and reciprocal kindness which should accompany such a connexion. These favours seem to be prompted, certainly by a liberal, but at the same time, by a wise policy; they are the gifts of an elder to a younger brother: not the wages paid by a superior to a dependent. They ought to excite gratitude, and to improve as well as to secure affection between us; but they need not either exalt the pride of one, or humble that of the other; and, to say the truth, I cannot help feeling that the pride of Ireland may be very well reconciled to an obligation, for which she has the consciousness of returning in the reciprocal blessings of imperial connexion, an ample and corresponding equivalent. I erase, therefore, such topics as these, from my argument of Irish subordination. They appear to me not more

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inconclusive to that point, than somewhat removed, perhaps, from that liberality which ought to characterize such discussions, whether between individuals or nations; and if these obligations of Ireland to Great Britain are ever enlarged upon, I confess I should see it with more pleasure in Ireland, than in this country.

Those real indications of subordination, on which I mean however to rely, appear to me such as ought not to mortify Ireland; because they are derived from the very nature and constitution of human affairs, and especially from one cause, which must afford, I conceive, rather gratification than disgust to national feeling, I mean the imperial connexion which makes Ireland a member of the noblest empire of the globe. For what, after all, is this imperial connexion in the necessity of which we are all agreed? If it be any thing more than a name, and if it afford any substantial advantage, does it not consist in securing a conformity, or rather perfect uniformity and unity, in the counsels of the two countries on affairs of imperial concern? Such are, in some respects the regulation of commerce; the transactions and intercourse with foreign states; the declaration of war; the conduct and direction of war: the negociation and conditions of peace. These are the principal, if not all the points of imperial or common concern; and in these it is admitted, and it is manifest that, for common safety and advantage, the two countries must be governed by one mind, and directed by one will, to the same end. Now let me ask in what manner is uniformity to be ensured on points so much subject to doubt in themselves, submitted to a judgment, I mean that of the human mind, the variety and uncertainty of which is proverbial, and especially where some degree of temporary and occasional opposition, both of feeling and interest, may be looked for in particular seasons and circumstances—I need not go about to prove by any tedious argument, what is always conceded on this point, nor need I scruple to assert what the best Irish patriots, and warmest partizans of Irish independence have always freely acknowledged, that unity of counsels can be brought about and preserved, only by leaving the lead to one of these nations in those points on which it is necessary that they should agree. Every sensible and enlightened Irish statesman, has, I think, admitted that in imperial concerns, Ireland must, and ought to follow in the wake of Great Britain. Here then is one authentic and signal badge of real subordination. But how is this necessary acquiescence of Ireland to be ensured? For it stands as yet on discretion and prudence, not on positive provision. May not an interval of passion, or the spleen of some contentious moment, or the influence of some popular leader, persuade Ireland, in an evil hour, to assert her right of separate and independent deliberation in the common concerns, and to vindicate that right by setting up an opinion of her own, different from that adopted in England? Against this misfortune, which would, otherwise be pretty sure of happening, the constitution of our connexion with Ireland has provided some securities. In the first place we have the same king. The king of Great Britain is, in virtue of that crown, king also of Ireland. Ireland is content to follow the fortunes of England in that great point; and this I state as another circumstance of dependence. But there are other still more sensible tokens of practical subordination—The whole executive government of Ireland is administered by a viceroy, appointed indeed by the sovereign of Ireland, but not with the advice of an Irish cabinet. He is appointed, in effect, by a British minister; he is subject to instructions from a British secretary of state, and responsible for every part of his administration municipal as well as imperial, not to the Irish parliament, not to the Irish laws, but to the British parliament and its high tribunals. Even this is not all: for all this may be thought inseparable from the nature and frame of our connexion. There remains a point which was not so much the unavoidable consequence of the imperial constitution, but was thought subject to such a moral and political necessity, as to have been deliberately assented to and retained by the most enlightened and ardent patriots of Ireland, even in the jealous review of her constitution, which took place at that period of enthusiasm and triumph which is become the grand aera of Irish freedom and pride, I mean the year 1782. The circumstance I now allude to is this. The legislative functions of the sovereign of Ireland can be performed only under the great seal, not of Ireland, but of Great Britain. Notwithstanding the extreme and jealous tenderness of the Irish nation, on all that could remotely, or even in the refinements of political sub-

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tlety, affect the independence of their parliament, although that parliament is the shrine on which the nation itself is, it seems, now to be laid a victim; that Irish parliament was left, and remains at this hour, dependent for the validity of every one of its legislative acts, first on the chancellor of England, and through his responsibility, on that very parliament of England, an equal participation in the authority of which is thought so degrading to Ireland. God forbid that Ireland should change her mind on these points of voluntary subordination, or that her pride should supersede her wisdom, and a false dignity take the place of her substantial interest, at least in these particulars. For such are the few slender threads which yet hold together these ponderous bodies, and whenever they are broken we part for good. There is yet one other circumstance which not only indicates inferiority, but is so wholly irreconcileable with every notion of equality, and appears to me such a singularity in the condition of any country claiming the character of independent sovereignty, that I must add it to the list before I quit this topic. Ireland must take her part in all the wars of Great Britain. She must bear her share of their burdens, and incur all their hazards She may lose a province, or may become herself a province of the enemy. Yet Ireland cannot, by the utmost success of the war acquire an acre of new territory to the Irish dominion. Every acquisition made by the forces of the empire, however great her share may have been in the danger or exertion, accrues to the crown of Great Britain. If an island were taken by regiments raised in Ireland, and composed wholly of Irishmen, and by ships manned altogether by Irish seamen, that island is a British conquest, and not an Irish one. Ireland claims no sovereignty in any one of the foreign possessions or provinces of the British empire. She pretends to no dominion in India, in Ceylon, at the Cape of Good Hope, at Martinique, Trinidad, or Minorca. The Irish parliament has never asserted or conceived the right of legislating for any of the conquests of the king of England, that is to say of the king of Ireland. They are all subject *ipso facto*, to the legislature of Great Britain. Ireland has planted no Irish colonies, but has furnished planters to all those of Great Britain. In a word this whole class of sovereign rights and capacities, however inherent in the very nature of sovereignty, is wholly wanting in that of Ireland. If we were asked to define, or at least to describe an independent sovereignty, should we err much by saying, it is a state which can make war and peace, which can acquire dominion by conquest, and which can plant colonies, and establish foreign settlements? And if we would describe a subordinate and dependent country, could we do it better than by saying, it is a country which must contribute her quota to all the wars of a neighbouring kingdom, must incur all the risks of those wars and partake in all their disasters; while all that is acquired by their success falls, like the lion's share, to that country with which it claims to be co-ordinate and co-equal? I will insist no farther on this ungracious topic. What I have said, was necessary for my argument, and if I have demonstrated the real subordination of Ireland, it was certainly not for the disingenuous pleasure of gratifying the vanity of one nation, at the expense of another, but only to observe that subordination must be the constant companion of an imperial connexion with a more powerful and more considerable state, and that pride can fly only to one of two remedies, I mean, total and absolute separation, or a perfect, incorporating and equalizing union.

This argument is often conducted as if the question lay between distinct existence and total extinction. This is a fale view of the alternative. If Ireland foregoes her separate individuality, it is not to perish: but still preserving in full life and vigour, her own existence, she becomes identified with a larger whole; and so far from the pretended annihilation with which our adversaries would alarm her, she appears to me to acquire new extension. I would ask in what manner is an inhabitant of any province or county of Ireland degraded, when he is enabled to say that he is an Irishman, and that he is besides a citizen of the united empire of Great Britain and Ireland; and when instead of admission, as it were, by courtesy, to an indirect and circuitous advantage from the greatness of another country, to which he himself claims to be in some sort a stranger, he can assert as clear a title and as positive ownership and property in the glory and prosperity of the empire to which he will belong, as any native of Great Britain can do at this moment?—I cannot better describe the condition of Ireland after the union, or better

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illustrate the improvement of its independence and dignity, than by saying, that her situation will from that moment be precisely the same in all points with that of Great Britain herself. Unless we suppose, therefore, Ireland in her present situation, more independent and less subordinate than Great Britain, we cannot imagine that her independence will be diminished by the union. And if it be true, as we have shown, that she is at present dependent, and subordinate to Great Britain in many respects, it is clear, that a union which shall have the effect of placing the two countries on a footing of perfect equality, must improve the independence and dignity of the inferior, that is to say, of Ireland. Is Ireland then annihilated by these means? No; Ireland is still Ireland, while a new scope is given to the pride, and a larger field opened to the patriotism of every Irishman. Let me ask, in fine, where we shall discover in the present condition of Ireland, that superior degree of independent dignity, which should outweigh the real and solid benefits of union: or where we can perceive in the change which that union will operate on the political situation of Ireland, the degradation and indignity which should forbid her even to deliberate, and raise an inseparable barrier, both to her aggrandizement and happiness?

I do conceive, indeed, how the situation of some individuals may be such as to afford a greater share of personal consideration or advantage in Ireland, while confined within its present limits, than they might obtain on the greater theatre of the united kingdoms. Even here, indeed, the computation may be fallacious; but however that question may stand with regard to individuals, I am sure that the inhabitants of Ireland will gratify a sound love of national dignity, while they procure to their country unspeakable advantages of every other sort, by their accession to the noble empire of which the union would make them citizens.

I must therefore conclude, that although I must respect the feelings of those who, following this instinct of national pride, which I have allowed to be in some sort natural, have been blinded to the true merits of this question, either as it regards the interests or the dignity of their country; and although I cannot refuse a considerable degree of indulgence even to the intemperance and violence excited by any form of patriotism, and even by its errors; yet I must persist in saying, that those will ever appear to me to have evinced a more genuine, a more profound and solicitous affection for their country, who have not refused to deliberate on such mighty interests, but have resisted a first and false impulse, and chosen for their guide rather the slower and less captivating torch of reason, than the more lively flashes of passion and prejudice. Nor can I refrain from adding, that if there be indeed any individuals, or descriptions of men, who, not misled themselves, but far above the influence of those delusions which they have practised upon the multitude, have seen nothing in this great question but personal or local interests, and have sought to mask a narrow preference of individual and partial advantage under this pretence of national pride and feeling; if such men, I say, with these motives at the bottom of their hearts, and with the profanation of a great public virtue on their lips, have frustrated the wise and paternal counsel given by our common sovereign for the permanent and perpetual benefit, and not less for the present and immediate preservation of the empire in all its parts, and especially of their own particular country; I own I cannot part with this subject, without declaring loudly that I envy neither the pillows and consciences of those men, nor the place they are likely to fill in the history of their country.

There is yet one objection on which I am disposed to trespass on your lordships indulgence, rather from the importance which has been given to it by those who oppose the union, than from any weight I think it entitled to myself. The point I now allude to is, a supposed disability in the respective parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland to sanction such a measure. This is another objection on which the merits of the main question are waved, and in which those who have been defeated on that ground, or who are conscious that they must be so, would still take refuge. It resembles a plea to the jurisdiction; and although I am far from assenting to a very absurd doctrine which I have heard falsely ascribed to our law, that he who pleads to the jurisdiction shall abide by that plea: and when it has been over-ruled shall not plead over, but be concluded on the facts and merits of his cause; yet I think myself entitled to claim thus much from those who resort to this objection. That, although after it has

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been over-ruled, and the jurisdiction of parliament has been established, they shall be at liberty to recur back to the question of expediency; yet while we are discussing the question of competence, and for the purpose of that argument, the merits shall be granted. The objection cannot otherwise be placed on its own proper and peculiar ground: for if the competence of parliament were disputed merely on the ground of inexpediency in the particular act, it must be felt in a moment that the question of competence, with regard to the union, would stand exactly on the same footing as if it related to any other legislative measure, however clearly within the acknowledged powers and daily practice of parliament. In order to obtain, therefore, a distinct and substantive judgment on the question of competence, it must be kept pure, and uncomplicated with any other consideration; which can only be done by trying it in a case of admitted expediency. I think myself entitled, then, for the purpose of this argument, to assume, that the proposed union would be beneficial to both countries, and I am at liberty to state its advantages, or its necessity, as high as I please. In a word, my adversary in this argument must assent to the measure as expedient and necessary, denying only the authority of parliament to execute it.

Now, if a measure be expedient, I am to ask, in the first place, why may it not be executed by parliament? And, in the next place, if parliament is not competent where shall we find a more adequate authority? I have for me, the general rule and law of the constitution, which establishes the universal authority of the legislature, and defines it by no limits or qualification that I am acquainted with. Whatever the whole nation could do, if there were no parliament, is within the regular and fundamental powers of parliament. This is admitted to be the general rule; and here I might plant my foot, at least until the exception were specified, and the principle of that exception established. The universality of parliamentary power has been characterised by the strong and emphatic title of Omnipotence. And, in the theory of our constitution, strong and emphatic as this phrase is, it need not, I think, be deemed merely a bold figure, as it has been called by some writers on our government, but as literally and correctly descriptive of parliamentary supremacy, and of the unlimited sovereignty of the British legislature.

I am aware of the reply generally made to this assertion of unlimited power. I may be told, that powers unlimited in theory are yet finite and controlled in practice, and that, in its exercise, the most unbounded authority is still circumscribed, at least within the moral boundaries of right and wrong. I assent to this restriction, and even assert it; but what does my adversary gain by this concession? Parliament ought not to do what is wrong, and is to be supposed incapable of doing it. In this sense, the power of parliament is no more limited than the Divine Omnipotence itself, which is incapable of evil. I say also of Parliament that it is incapable of evil; and I say it in this sense, that what parliament does is not to be accounted evil, but is to be taken and acquiesced in as right—Why? will it be said, Is not parliament composed of men, and therefore fallible? Yes; but who must judge the fallibility of parliament, and to whom must its questionable acts be submitted—if it be not to other men, yet more fallible than themselves? For I wish to know where men are to be found or in what forms or combinations they are to be assembled, to whom such a superlative authority could with safety be confided.

The more we turn this argument, and the more carefully it is viewed on all its sides and bearings, the more we shall be satisfied that the only security we possess for every thing valuable in the British government; that all that conduces to order and happiness; that the whole efficacy of our constitution towards its great and beneficial purposes resides in this single principle, of the unlimited, unqualified supremacy of parliament. There is no appeal acknowledged in the constitution, from that authority, because no appellate tribunal can be imagined, habile to such a jurisdiction; none from which the wisdom of those many ages, which have brought our constitution to maturity and excellence, has not already constituted an appeal, final and conclusive in all cases whatever, to that very parliament, from which you would again appeal back to them. Observe the vicious circle into which this appeal from the parliament to the people must lead us. The people at large cannot conveniently, nor safely for themselves, make law, or administer go-

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vernment. The constitution of parliament has therefore been framed, as affording the most commodious and perfect organ of law and government, and the best and most secure depository of the sovereign authority. But their acts must, it seems, be questioned, and their authority superseded by that very people at large, whose inability and unaptness have given occasion to the institution of parliament. The speedy resolution of the argument into this contradiction and absurdity, is, therefore, manifest.

It is easy to foresee that this claim of unlimited power may be opposed by the counter-claim of a right to resist an abuse and perversion of authority, however legal. This question of resistance, that is to say, concerning the right of the subject to oppose by force the acts or orders of the legal sovereign, by which your lordships know, I should not mean, in this country, merely the throne, but that I speak of that body in which the full sovereignty of any nation resides, according to the established constitution of its government, and which, with reference to this kingdom, would be the parliament; the point, I say, thus explained, of resistance, at the discretion of the subject, to the legal sovereign, is of no trivial concern, and ought not to be rashly or irreverently approached. The question is of high import, and delicate complexion. It appears to me, to be one of those mysteries, the acknowledgment of which is much connected with its recluse sanctity, and its being withdrawn from daily and vulgar contemplation, to be reserved only for the great occasions which are worthy to draw it forth, and, "like a robe pontifical—ne'er to be seen, but wondered at." I believe it is impossible that any thing better should be said on this subject, than what I find quoted by an eloquent patriot of my own country, Mr. Fletcher, of Saltown, from the mouth of Mr. William Colvin, whom he styles one of the wisest men Scotland ever had, and who, speaking of defensive arms, that is to say, the right of the subject to carry arms, for the purpose of resisting oppression from the sovereign, was used to express himself in these remarkable words:—"That it were to be wished all princes thought them lawful, and the people unlawful." No wish can be more salutary, and no answer to this delicate and important question can be more perfectly wise as well as discreet. I confess, also, that on this single subject, I do not like the solution the worse for being somewhat oracular. But if a peremptory opinion be demanded, and we must needs pronounce, I think myself entitled to answer generally in the language of the constitution. No limit has been appointed to the authority of the sovereign; nor any exception specified to the obedience of the subject. The constitution has not foreseen any case of resistance, and has made no provision for it. Such a case is not, and cannot be, in the contemplation of any constitution whatever. A pre-established, that is to say, a constitutional right of resistance to the constitutional sovereign, is a solecism; a mere contradiction in terms. It can exist in no constitution that either is, or ever was, because it is inconsistent with the very notion of constitution, or government. We must answer, then, that resistance is illegal, and is contrary to the law, in every form of government of which law is the foundation. If an extreme case be put to me, I may well refuse to answer it, until the case arise in practice. Stated theoretically, it is always a snare. When it happens practically, the case will answer for itself; and if resistance would not follow on the spur of any provocation that can be stated, without the previous sanction of some declared and anticipated authorization in the constitution to legalize it, it is a case which we may pronounce, by that very criterion, unfit to produce or justify resistance. Every case of resistance must stand, as it were, upon its own individual responsibility, and must be such as to provide for itself, without the aid of any antecedent principle to lean upon. Such cases, whatever may be said of them by history, whatever may be felt of them by the generous sympathies of mankind, must look for no support from law, with which they cannot co-exist; they are all without the pale of law, and all illegal; they are all extra-constitutional; all in direct contradiction with the particular constitution, as well as with the general principle of government; they are mere solitary, insulated, substantive facts, equally incapable of deriving from, or generating any binding analogy of general and permanent authority. These questions are not new in this country. We have passed through a century of such controversies, and have, since that period, enjoyed a century more of happiness, the fruit of the wise and profound, as well as spirited judgment of our ancestors on these

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debates; a judgment, as your lordships know, equally removed, on one hand, from a mean and pusillanimous acquiescence under oppression, and, on the other, from those shallow but ruinous abstractions which so much pains are taken to bring once more into fashion. We do not come, therefore, in England, so raw into these discussions, as to be misled by the juvenile refinements of political metaphysics, or by the early puerilities of those who may have read their Locke without reading history, or who in reading their Locke have forgot their history, into errors, which we know to be as fatal to the practicable blessings of liberty, as to the strength and stability of government. We know that an established system and theory of resistance is but another word for anarchy; and that, whatever be the excellence of any constitution in other respects, however wisely and skilfully constructed it may be, even for stability, in its other provisions, let there be added this one principle of a permanent and subsisting right to resist, even in the most limited case, since the existence of that case must, by the very nature of the thing, be submitted to the discretion of every individual in the state, that constitution will bear in its bosom the seed of its own dissolution, and a principle of dispersion and demolition, utterly irreconcileable with the tranquillity or peace of the people, and destructive of all tenacity and duration in the government.

But it will be said, this is not a question of resistance, and we are inquiring only whether this measure does not exceed the limits of that authority with which the constitution has invested parliament. I am, then, to ask, since the power of parliament is general and undefined, in what respect is this particular act distinguishable from others which are admitted to be within its competence, in such a manner as to become an exception to the general rule of the constitution? And here I am under the difficulty of those who are to combat without an adversary, or to combat an adversary whom they cannot see. I am to search for my opponent, or must begin by creating the enemy whom I am afterwards to engage; for as yet I have certainly heard nothing precise on this subject. I must, therefore, look among the distinctive qualities of this measure, for some circumstance on which to found the exception. The first circumstance I observe in the union of two countries, is an extension of territory, compared with the former bounds and surface of each, since each is respectively augmented by the accession of the other. But this effect of union cannot be a ground of disqualification to parliament, since the constitution commits the same power to a narrower authority, I mean the prerogative of the crown alone. If a conquest be made without any contrary stipulation, the conquered country becomes subject, *ipso facto*, to the legislation of parliament. The king may also obtain by treaty the annexation of any new territory to his crown, by which means it will fall, of course, under the government of the British parliament. In both these ways the dominion of Great Britain can be enlarged, to any extent, by the sole prerogative of the crown—and much more by the king in parliament. We must look, then, for some other circumstance in this case to exclude the general authority of parliament.

Besides extending the bounds of the kingdom, at present subject to the sovereignty of parliament, a legislative union extends and enlarges parliament itself, accommodating the size of the legislature to the accession of territory. It amounts then to an alteration in the frame and condition of parliament; and we are to inquire whether parliament is, on that account, disqualified from performing it. It may be worth while to remark, in the first place, that this formal change is, however, consonant with the general spirit and genius of the constitution. Is it not fair, while we are discussing the conditions under which two countries are to be united, to consider what would have been the case if they had been one from the beginning? Would not Ireland, in that case, have had representatives in the legislature? It would not be difficult to show from history, that while Ireland was considered as exclusively under the government of the English parliament, that is to say, before the institution of the Irish parliament, that country sent members to the parliament of England. The same principle has generally, though I do not say without exception, operated in similar cases, I mean in cases of the accession of contiguous territories. Of this, Wales, the Counties Palatine, and Scotland, are similar examples. The minor instances of Calais, and Berwick on Tweed, may have been less attended to, but they illustrate also this general propensity of

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our constitution. While Calais was subject to the Crown of England, that town enjoyed and exercised, by charter from Harry 8th, the privilege of sending two burgesses to parliament. And as soon as Berwick on Tweed, which being a frontier town, frequently changed masters, according to the various fortune of war, was at length settled under the dominion of England, by the union of both crowns, and the final extinction of war, at the accession of James 1st, that town received also the franchise of returning members to parliament. The constitution, in a word, leans that way; and it may perhaps reasonably be thought a greater violence to that constitution, and a more fundamental and essential change, to add extensive territories to the country already governed by parliament, without giving to those territories a participation in the constitution, and a share in the representation, than to accompany such an accession of territory with a legislative as well as an incorporating union. Yet, no man disputes the power of the crown, according to the prerogative which I have lately stated, to operate the former and the greater change even without the aid of parliament. Is it not then fair to argue, *à fortiori*, and *à multo fortiori*, that the larger authority of the whole legislature shall be more competent, or much more competent, to the smaller change, that is to say, to extend the bounds of the empire in a manner congenial and in unison with the constitution, as it would do in the measure proposed, than the narrower power of the prerogative can be to the greater change, that is to say, to an accession of territory and a union with other countries, on a principle abhorrent from the genius of our government? Yet the competence of these latter acts, whether to the crown or to the parliament has never been disputed; and rests, indeed, too firmly on the repeated and ordinary exercise of their powers to admit of question.

But let us return to this objection, and admit, that a legislative union with Ireland, must operate a change on the condition, or even the constitution of parliament; and let that change be as considerable as the objector would choose to state it. Does it follow that such a change on parliament cannot be made by parliament, as it may be said in physics, that a body cannot act upon itself? Such an alteration appears to me, neither more nor less than a law, and as such, to fall within the natural province of the law-giver, who in this country, is the parliament. How will it be shown that these laws, affecting the constitution of parliament, are alone incompetent to parliament? Our own experience has taught us the contrary. I dare say there are very few of your lordships who have not assisted in the passing of laws precisely of this description, and, however warmly such measures may have been resisted or debated on other grounds I will venture to say, there is not one of us who has ever heard or known this objection, of the insufficiency of parliament opposed to them. The various laws for limiting the duration of parliaments, for regulating elections, for altering the qualification of electors, or elected, for disfranchising offending boroughs, and communicating their franchises to strangers, that is to say, for example, to the freeholders of a neighbouring hundred; all these, and many more, falling precisely within the principle of this objection, have been passed, by no higher authority than that of parliament. What are all those proposals for what is called sometimes moderate, sometimes radical reform, but laws for the alteration, for the total subversion of the constitutional parliament? To me they have appeared little short of revolution, incipient revolution. Yet, I have never heard one of those, who with similar views of these projects, have been better qualified, than myself, by talents and weight in this country, to oppose them, object the incompetence of parliament to entertain and to adopt these changes in its own constitution, if they should appear expedient.

An alteration of the established religion which has always been the work of parliament, is another change, and a most fundamental one in its constitution; since the whole parliamentary franchise, whether elective or representative, is transferred from one class and description of the people to another. The whole is taken from all those who possessed it, and vested in those who did not.

The laws so frequently made by parliament for altering and regulating the accession to the crown, bear a strong analogy to the case which is now objected to, amounting indeed, to a total change in one whole branch or member of the parliament.

This objection, then, cannot be maintained *simpliciter*, on the incompetence of

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parliament to make an alteration on its own constitution or condition; and we must come, in fine, to the single point which my imagination can suggest, as a possible ground of distinction, namely, the great and superlative importance and magnitude of this transaction. We have seen that all other cases of a similar nature *ejusdem generis*, are within the acknowledged powers of parliament, and the daily exercise of those powers. But this is a measure, we must say, of such transcendent importance, as to exceed the ordinary capacities entrusted by the constitution to parliament, and to which the inherent sovereignty of the people itself is alone commensurate.

I can conceive no other rational shape into which this argument can be cast; but is it rational in substance also; or is it not the most palpable and the grossest violation of reason, the widest departure from every sound principle in the theory either of this constitution, or of government in general? It would be strange indeed if this point of superior importance should serve my adversary, since it is the very ground on which I rest most firmly my claim of exclusive cognizance to the parliament.

On what principle is the trust of legislation committed to parliament at all? Because no people on earth, not even the smallest population in the smallest territory, could ever exercise a democratic legislation in its entire and theoretical purity. If we look back to that most ancient and simple of all constitutions, I mean the patriarchal or the government of families which has been regarded as the first, and original model and archetype of all succeeding governments, we shall find that even these have rejected a mode of administration which it was, at least, easier to execute within the walls of a single tent, or the bounds of a wandering camp, and amongst a few individuals, than in any other more populous state. Authority was still deposited with selection in fewer hands than the whole even of those narrow communities. The heads of families, the chiefs of tribes; the elders; in a word, some select body or other, administered these small commonwealths. It would lead to unprofitable length if I were to pursue this reasoning with minuteness, as it would be easy to do, up to the conclusion, to which we all assent; namely, that the people of England cannot make law for themselves in any democratic form of constitution; that they are not provided or acquainted with any institution which should enable them to perform this feat of self-legislation, even if they were desirous of attempting it. They have no comitia; no assemblies of the people in Hyde Park, or St. George's-fields, to the decrees of which the millions of absent Englishmen, owe, or choose to acknowledge any obedience. And there being a physical impossibility to collect their voices individually, even if that physical and practical impossibility, if I may say so without the imputation of incorrectness, were not the weakest objection to such a mode of legislation, there is an established organ of the general will, qualified by its frame and constitution, to apply the collective wisdom of the nation to its collective interests, and to administer the sovereign power of the state on this secure and solid foundation. The sovereignty of parliament, thus explained, is in the end no more; it is neither more nor less, but identically and precisely the same with the sovereignty of the people itself, appearing in the only visible, tangible or perceptible form in which it can be recognized in this country. It is, then, first, on the vices and inabilities of all other modes by which the voice of the people can be expressed, or even its opinions formed agreeable to their general and collective interests; and secondly, on the peculiar and approved excellence of the constitution which we enjoy, that the authority and sovereignty of parliament has been established.

Let us endeavour, for a moment, to imagine some better mode of collecting, in a popular way, the sense of the nation, on any great point of policy or law, or, if you please, on this specific measure. Shall it be by meetings convoked by anonymous hand-bills, in the fields adjoining to this metropolis, and directed by orators on carts, tubs, or other moveable rostra? Every one knows that the union with Ireland, for the discussion of which such assemblies were to be called, would not be the first order of the day. The most pressing sympathies and fellow feelings of such a legislature would be for the suffering felons, traitors, or mutineers, in Newgate and Cold-bath-fields. Their first and second measures, in favour of the liberty and property of the subject, would be to deliver the gaols, and emancipate the bank; and they would soon simplify this intricate and complex constitution, by uniting the

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legislative, the judicial, and the executive powers; as they would abridge the tedious delays of all those functions, by carrying, with their own hands, into instant effect, their own laws and judgments. I remember to have seen a parliament deliberate in St. George's fields in the forenoon; and I do not forget, that on the same evening I saw London and Westminster in flames. Shall the appeal from parliament lie to county meetings, called by the sheriffs, on the requisition of a few dozens of signatures: and shall the people of England be bound in this great interest, by a collation of the various and discordant resolutions, passed by a respectable show of hands, at the Georges and different Angels of the kingdom? Shall the magistrates at quarter sessions, shall grand juries at assizes, or, in fine, shall the churchwardens and overseers of the poor, at parish vestries, supersede parliament, on account of their superior wisdom and knowledge; and, above all, because they have received a more authentic and direct delegation from the people at large? Or shall we prefer, rather, those convivial parliaments which hold their sittings occasionally at the different taverns of this city? whose resolutions, moved in the form of toasts, are agreed to in bumpers, and whose laws, proposed in stanzas, to the tune of a ballad, are passed in full chorus. Is not this jovial system of legislation, a mere inversion of the good old constitution, which, if it permits the electors to be drunk, requires the parliament to be sober? But must we, then, to speak seriously, depose the parliament chosen by the people, in favour of these self-elected, self-ballotted parliaments, attended by very small minorities of that parliament which was chosen by the people, after they have withdrawn their attendance from that parliament to which the people sent them? In fine, what is to be the form of this arch parliament, which is to qualify it better than the British parliament, as it now stands, for legislating, just in proportion as the subject is of higher import and dignity, and of greater compass and difficulty, than those ordidinary acts of legislation to which those high authorities are utterly inadequate and incompetent.

Is it not, then, manifest, that a legislature in which the sovereignty of the state is vested, because every other political body, known in this country, is deficient in the requisites for common and ordinary legislation, and because it is itself the most perfect model of human polity, in all matters of legislation, must be yet better entitled to preference and to exclusive and sovereign jurisdiction, in cases of great and signal importance, than in any other? It seems to me, therefore, the strangest perversion of reason, and the most palpable contradiction and absurdity to place the incompetence of parliament on that ground on which its sole and exclusive competence most firmly and securely rests; I mean the superior importance of this law.

Having spoken to the principle, let us see how the question stands on authority. I shall not encumber my argument with the authorities which are familiar in every mouth, to prove a position, not disputed in any quarter, namely, the general supremacy of parliament; and I shall respect your lordships leisure sufficiently to omit the book authorities on this general but fundamental truth, although the passages I might refer to, assert distinctly, as your lordships know, amongst other examples of the universal faculties of parliament, its competence to this specific measure of a legislative union with other countries. There are two sorts of authority: first, the opinions of learned and eminent men. Next, precedent. To begin with the first and to speak of the *responsa prudentum*.

To the learning of the corporations of Dublin, and of the freeholders of the county of Louth, and some other counties; to the authority of some members of the Irish bar, I shall oppose the chancellor of Ireland, and the chiefs of the four supreme courts of law in that country. I shall oppose the clear and unequivocal sense of the House of Lords of Ireland, evinced not only by its vote, but by the withdrawing that part of the amendment, proposed originally by lord Powescourt, which involved that question. I shall oppose the opinion of the majority of the House of Commons of Ireland, for I think myself entitled to claim the dissent of that House to this proposition on a fair and candid view of its proceedings. The House once agreed, by a majority, however slender, to entertain the measure; and afterwards rejected it by a majority as slender; for the difference between one and five hardly deserves notice. If to this equality of opinion on the principal measure be added the consideration that the opposers of the union did not even tender this proposition to the

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House, did not venture to load their question with that denial of the competence of parliament, of which it had been found necessary actually to relieve the same question in the House of Lords, we shall hardly doubt of their consciousness, that in a balance trimmed so nicely, this weighty point would have turned the scale against them. But as time adds sanction and reverence to authority, let me close this inquiry by opposing to all the rash and intemperate opinions, or rather declarations of opinion, which the temerity of party spirit, or a false and misguided enthusiasm, have dictated in Ireland at this day, the single authority of lord Somers; himself, I think, a host, on such a question. If any man in England, or in Ireland, as has been often said of that great man, thinks himself a better lawyer or a better Whig than lord Somers, he is welcome to enter the list; while I shall rest contented with this single name, supported as it might be by a cloud of learned, able, and upright statesmen, lawyers, and friends of liberty, from that period to the present hour.

Let us now look at precedent. It is not to be expected that there should be many. Such transactions must be rare. It is enough for my argument to say, that the only examples our history furnishes, of legislative unions, since the institution of parliaments, are precedents in point on the question I am now debating; namely, the competence of parliament to enact them. Wales and Scotland have both been united to England by incorporating legislative unions. In both cases the parliament alone sanctioned the measure. The union with Scotland is, perhaps, yet more closely in point with the present proposal. Since a separate parliament existed in both countries, and the respective parliaments were the parties in the treaty, that treaty was negotiated under the authority of the two parliaments; they sanctioned the conclusion; and they executed finally and irreversibly that happy system, under which we now live secure, at the distance of almost a century.

Although our history cannot furnish many precedents of this precise measure, I mean of incorporating union, there are, however, many examples of other proceedings, bearing a strong analogy to the present, and equal, if not superior, in importance—I mean those acts of the legislature which have altered the succession of the crown. I need not cite the instances of such changes. They are frequent in the history of England, and they all prove the supreme authority of parliament, even in these highest acts of sovereignty. By whatever means such changes have been brought about; whatever has been the efficient cause, or instrument of such revolutions, they have all derived their sanction and validity from parliament, the seal of which has always been resorted to by the new sovereign, as the only effectual security for his title, whether he stood on a claim essentially good, or on successful usurpation—and the anxiety with which the many repetitions of parliamentary recognition have been sought after, by those who were interested in a new or unquestionable title, is remarkable on this argument.

But without dwelling on more ancient examples, it is surely sufficient to recall that of the Revolution which placed king William on the throne, and the subsequent limitation of the crown to the house of Hanover. Will it be said, that the declaration of king James's abdication, and the vacancy of the throne, was a point of less note or value, or of a lower rank in the scale of sovereign functions, than the union with Scotland or Wales, or than the measure now in contemplation? Will it be said, that the whole transaction of the Revolution was of a lower or meaner class and order, in legislation, than any union, or any other national event that is either known or can be imagined? I do not fear that it will. By what authority, then, was that great change in one branch of the legislature, and in the condition of the nation operated? To what authority was the prince of Orange advised to resort, for the sanction of his enterprise and the security of his crown? Observe the difference between the circumstances in which he stood, and those in which the present proceeding is tendered to parliament. By the flight and abdication of the king, and the consequent vacancy of the throne, an actual and practical dissolution of the government seemed to have taken place, if it can ever do so, in any possible or imaginable case. It was in such a predicament, if it could happen in any, that the supposed dormant title of the people to administer the sovereignty in their own persons, so far, at least, as regarded the reintegration of the deficient and truncated government, must have been awakened and called into action.

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That motion was, indeed, different from the present, in which we have every branch of the legislature complete, and the whole frame of our government not only perfect and apt to all its purposes, but in the actual and daily exercise of its functions; and in which we are ourselves debating this very question concerning parliamentary powers, within the walls of a subsisting parliament, and in the ordinary discharge of our parliamentary duty. Yet, under the circumstances which I have described, what did the prince of Orange resolve, under the direction of his whig advisers? Did he apply to the people at large in any new and anomalous form? Was it to county meetings, or assemblies in the fields, or, in a word, to any unknown and unusual organ of the public mind, that he applied to sanction his title? Far from it. Even the first Convention, under the authority of which he afterwards summoned the Convention of parliament, was composed, in the first place, of the House of Lords; and next, of those who had been members of parliament in the reign of Charles 2nd. It will not be said, that these persons had any specific delegation from the people, either for this special act, or for any other end; either express, by positive commission, or implied, by their recent election. A whole reign had elapsed since they came from the people. Their delegation and functions had been exhausted and had expired long since. Yet so much preferable did this approximation to the regular constitutional authority, when an entire conformity with it was impossible; so much preferable did even this shadow, this surviving flavour of the parliamentary character, which still hung about these relics of a deceased parliament, appear, when compared with any new and strange invention for conjuring up the latent sovereignty of the people, and substituting some phantom and chimera to represent that sovereignty in the room of its only true and acknowledged form, I mean that of parliament, that the prince of Orange did not think the validity of a Convention parliament, to be summoned by his new authority, would stand on a sure foundation, until its convocation should receive the sanction if not of a subsisting parliament, at least of a body as nearly and closely resembling one as the circumstances admitted. The Convention parliament was convoked—and that parliament enacted the Revolution—which, however, was yet hardly deemed perfect, until it was consummated by the ratification of subsequent and yet more regular parliaments.

The subsequent limitation of the crown, after the death of the duke of Gloucester, was also the work of parliament; and I believe so far from deeming that authority incompetent, or wishing to rely on any other higher or more transcendent power, none of those whig statesmen and lawyers who presided in every step of the Revolution, and who had the Protestant succession at heart, would have thought that great object secure, if the limitation to the princess Sophia had stood on a decree of the people, conveyed by any other organ than precisely that which they employed, I mean the parliament. If these great men, then, were content to rest the Revolution itself, that vast and prime concern, embracing every other possible interest of Englishmen, on the single and perfect efficacy of an act of parliament, we are not to wonder if the same men thought the respective parliaments of England and Scotland, the competent, and the only competent instruments to accomplish the union between the two countries.

What overweening preference is it of our own times, or our own persons, that should make us thus fastidious in casting by, as of inferior and more imperfect growth, the constitutional Whiggism and wholesome liberty of the reigns of king William and queen Anne, to intoxicate ourselves and our country with that double-refined, that sublimated and adulterated modern drug which is now poisoning the world? I own, for my part, that I like to see, on the liberty of my country, and your lordships know the revered authority by which I am supported in that sentiment, that I like to see on my own and my country's liberty the seal of the old Whigs, and am apt enough to think that counterfeit which does not bear this mark. I am above all disposed to fly, as from certain ruin, the spurious philosophy, the sophisticated and fatal abstractions, which so far from lighting us to the temple of Liberty, are but decoys to plunge the world into the toils of wretchedness and slavery. I confess, then, that I recoil with disgust, and not without alarm, from every pretence for disavowing or superseding our established government, however qualified in time, occasion, or limited purpose. I cannot think those men

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profitable servants of their country, nor do I think their country disposed to regard them as friends, who would weaken in the breasts of Englishmen the native and rooted love of our boasted government and laws; and divert the settled allegiance of the happiest people upon earth, from the established sovereignty of parliament, in which, however, is inseparably bound up the whole of the security, prosperity, and freedom, present and to come, of the British nation. And I must hold every proposal to abdicate or surrender the sovereign power of parliament, but for an hour, into the hands of any strangers to the constitution that is to say, into any other hands whatever, as a mere fraud upon the people; as a gross violation of its most precious privilege; as a flagrant invasion of the dearest birth-right of Englishmen, which consists, according to me, in the right to be governed by their parliaments, and by no other human means.

There are a variety of topics, as your lordships well know, to which I have not even alluded, and on some of which I should certainly be disposed to say a few words: but in truth, I have already abused your indulgence not only much too long, but, I am conscious also much too tediously; and I therefore refrain—very grateful for having been permitted to state such reasons as have satisfied my mind, on the whole matter, that this measure is expedient in itself, and that parliament is competent to execute it. I have expressed a strong opinion, that the union of these two nations, already united by nature in their interests, must, in the order of human events, necessarily come to pass; and I shall conclude by a sincere and fervent prayer, dictated by the purest and the most ardent desire for the happiness of both kingdoms, that the blessings sure to flow from a consummation so devoutly to be wished, may not be long delayed.

Lord *Boringdon* said, that however anxious he might be for the success of the measure, it should not receive support from him, if he thought it in any way called for the sacrifice of the dignity, the independence, or the liberty of the Irish nation. The noble lord who had opened the discussion had placed, in the strongest point of view, the immense commercial indulgences bestowed by this country on Ireland; and it might reasonably be maintained, that the dignity of Ireland would receive additional splendor, when she should enjoy that as a right which she now receives as a favour; the dignity of Ireland would receive additional splendor when she should become an incorporated and integral part of the most enlightened and powerful empire in the civilized world. He had some difficulty in his own mind as to the manner in which the subject of independence ought to be mentioned. He was convinced there were many who were either indifferent or hostile to the measure, on the idea that the nominal independence of the Irish parliament is converted into a practical dependence on the British government. If there were any in whose minds such a ground of opposition lurked, he would beg to ask them, whether they thought such a practical dependence could be maintained without a general and systematic corruption of the individuals composing the legislature of Ireland; and in this case he would ask, what sort of principles of public faith and morality they thought were likely to be engendered and perpetuated by such a system? The idea that the independence of the Irish parliament would be affected by the transfer of its local existence, was in the highest degree absurd. That parliament was intended to be composed of a number of members proportionate to the general scale of the imperial representation; and there could be no reason for supposing that it would be more indifferent to the interests of its immediate constituents than were the members deputed either by Scotland or Wales; and its powers of deliberation, instead of being confined within a local and limited extent, would necessarily embrace the greatest questions of imperial concern. The idea that the political liberties of Ireland were to be sacrificed by the measure of a union altogether surprised him: it was with difficulty he could believe that any such apprehension had ever been entertained, when one of the measures, which it was universally believed would sooner or later follow from a union, was, the removing the political incapacities of four-fifths of the inhabitants of that country. Was there any one with a particle of English feeling about him who would not experience inexpressible satisfaction at the adoption of any measure which was calculated to lead to the removal of political incapacities on the ground of religious opinions in a manner which

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might be consistent with the security of the state and the establishment? Was there any one who knew the blessings of the British constitution, but must wish those blessings to be extended to every rank and sect of his fellow subjects. It might be asked, whether the measure to which he had been alluding, might not be adopted as well by a separate as by an imperial legislature? That question should be answered by the Irish themselves. Six weeks had not elapsed since the question was brought under the consideration of the House of Commons of Ireland, and met with the support of precisely three individuals!—A great deal had been said relative to the adjustment of 1782. If that adjustment had at that time been considered final, he never could have admitted that circumstance as a conclusive argument against a union at present; but the fact that those persons most concerned in its completion did not consider it as final, afforded a strong argument in favour of the present measure; inasmuch as the measure of itself created the succedaneum which was confessed to be absolutely necessary at that time, and which was wanting to supply the place of that system, and that power which had just then been annihilated. He grounded his assertion relative to the opinions held upon this adjustment by those who concluded it, upon Mr. Fox's speech on the commercial proposition in 1785. Mr. Fox then expressly declared, that "the resolution of the House of Commons of the 17th of May 1782, in no way referred to arrangements of commerce, but solely and exclusively to objects political and imperial."* Now it was no small recommendation of the present measure, that the persons by whom the adjustment of 1782 was concluded, thought that their own work was not sufficient, and that a succedaneum was necessary to replace the power which they had annulled. At any rate, let the opinions have been what they might, by no principle of reason could that adjustment have been considered as final. Even during the short space of time which had elapsed since its conclusion, the absurdity of considering it as final had been sufficiently demonstrated by the facts which had happened. Every one of their lordships must recollect the discordant proceedings which were adopted by the legislature of each country during the awful suspension of the executive power in 1788. It was by accident alone that the executive authority was vested in the same person; and though by good fortune this circumstance took place, yet it was to be observed, that the tenure of the power given by the one legislature was essentially different from that which proceeded from the other. Different limits were actually set to the power of the executive government in each country; and it was even a perfect matter of chance that two independent executives had not been established in one and the same empire. He would mention another point which would also expose the absurdity of the arrangement of 1782; and the complete inadequacy, and even perniciousness, of two independent legislatures, and of the whole imperial connexion as then established, and now subsisting, between the two countries. He alluded to what happened when the commercial propositions were brought forward in 1785. He did not say in this case as in the regency, that the very existence of the empire was endangered by the distinctness of the two legislatures, but that this distinctness operated most materially to the prejudice of Ireland; for the fourth proposition having been considered by the parliament of that country as interfering with its legislative independence, and having been, with the others, on that account rejected by them, it was clear that the legislative distinctness was the real cause which had ever since deprived Ireland of the immense commercial advantages which were offered to her by those propositions.—In scholastic disputations, or in abstract and theoretical discussions, it might be sufficient to urge objections, without substituting any thing in the place of that which was opposed. Such reasoning might be fair in these cases, but he never could allow of it in practical questions of the nature of that then under consideration. It might not therefore be unfair to ask the noble lords who opposed the measure of union, what other measure they would substitute in the place of it? From their speeches it certainly appeared that their opinions, as to the present unfortunate state of the sister kingdom, in no way differed from those entertained by the supporters of the present measure; and the same sentiment as to the necessity of attempting some amelioration must naturally follow. But, did they think that confidence and

* See Vol. 25, p. 966.

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tranquillity were likely to be re-established in Ireland without some great measure of empire, and by the limited powers of a local and separate legislature? Did they think a general concession to the Catholics would tend to convey confidence and security to the great body of proprietors? Did they think a radical reform in the representation would tend to assimilate the Irish to the British constitution, and thereby fasten the tie of connexion between them? Did they recommend the renewal of the attempt at compact, and conceive that the spirit which led to the rejection of that which was attempted in 1785, no longer existed? In short, during the whole of these discussions, in both countries, he had not heard of one single individual proposing any one single plan which he gave it as his opinion would have the effect of restoring peace and tranquillity to that divided country. The measure of union, though it had to combat much prejudice and much violence, certainly enjoyed a superiority to which no other could pretend, since it had already received the decided support of one of the two houses of the legislature, and of near one half of the other. And it was impossible for him to observe the comparative moderation of the latter debates in the House of Commons, nor the addresses from Antrim, Galway, &c. without indulging a hope, that, by persevering with firmness and moderation until the passions of men should have somewhat subsided in that country, truth would triumph over prejudice, and patriotism over clamour. But if Ireland was determined to reject the plan offered to her, the presentation of the proposed address was essential for the purpose of making known to her and to the world what were the conditions on which we were willing to unite with her.

The question was then put upon the Address, and agreed to.

Protest against the Address relative to a Union with Ireland.] The following Protest was entered on the Journals:

"Dissentient.

1. "Because, the measure of a legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland, the policy of which is highly questionable, and the importance of which demands the most calm, dispassionate, and deliberate examination, is persisted in and urged forward in compliment to his majesty's ministers under circumstances which ought imperiously to have deterred us from the prosecution of it.—The moment of civil disturbance and division, when the necessity of military law is alleged by ministers, and acknowledged by parliament, seems ill calculated for ensuring the full and unequivocal consent of the Irish people, without which, even the supporters of the measure must confess it to be illusory and dangerous in the extreme. And to commit the parliament of Great Britain to the wisdom of a project which the Commons of Ireland have rejected, and to which the inhabitants of that kingdom are disinclined, appears to us a whimsical expedient for securing the connexion of the two countries, and consolidating the strength of the empire.

2. "Because, as no jealousy or division has existed between the two legislatures, the present dangers and discontents in Ireland cannot be attributed to the independence of parliament, but must rather be considered as the bitter fruits of a coercive system of policy suggested by his majesty's advisers, and enforced under the sanction of the executive power with unconstitutional and wanton severity.

3. "Because, though the possibility of a different will in the two separate legislatures cannot be controverted, yet possible inconveniences in remote and extreme cases from supposed legislative measures, or possible instances of additional embarrassment to the executive government, are no arguments for the subversion of a system in which no such inconveniences have been experienced, and no such difficulties encountered. For the consequences of such reasoning would lead us to consolidate into one the different branches of our own excellent constitution; to remove all the checks which the jealousy of our ancestors have imposed on the executive government; to condemn whatever theory might suppose difficult, though practice had shown it to be easy; and to substitute hypothesis and speculation for history, fact, and experience.

4. Because the notion that a legislative union will either conciliate the affections of the discontented in Ireland, or furnish more effectual means for defeating the design of the enemy in that country, seems unsupported by reasoning, and in direct contradiction to analogy and experience. Were we to admit the beneficial consequences of a union, yet, the benefits

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which according to such hypothesis, are likely to result to Ireland from the measure, are, at least, progressive and distant, and can furnish, therefore, no reasonable hope of allaying immediate discontent, suppressing actual rebellion, or defeating designs already on foot. If, indeed, the enemies of the connexion endeavoured to effectuate a separation of the two kingdoms, by sowing jealousies and dissentions between the two parliaments) as was the case in Scotland, immediately previous to the union) the measure proposed would manifestly be an effectual, it might be represented as the only, remedy for the evil: but if it be true that their object is to disseminate jealousy, and foment discontent, not between the distant legislatures and governments of England and Ireland, but between the people and parliament, between the governed and government of that country; and if by representing their legislature as the corrupt agent of British ministers, and slavish engine of British tyranny, they have succeeded in alienating a large portion of his majesty's subjects; and if it be farther true, as stated in the report of the committees of secrecy of the Irish parliament, that the misrepresentations of a few individuals have been found sufficient to seduce the allegiance of one whole province in Ireland; we are indeed at a loss to conceive how the danger of such designs is to be averted, or the force of such misrepresentations diminished, by a measure, which reduces the number of representatives of the Irish people, transfers the legal organ of their will out of the bosom of their own country, and annihilates all independent and exclusive authority in that kingdom. An examination of the immediate consequences which the union formerly produced in Scotland, and a contemplation of the recent effects of its discussion in Ireland, suggest yet stronger reasons for doubting its efficacy either in healing discontents, or furnishing the means of resistance to any attempt of the enemy. We learn from the most authentic documents of those times, that in Scotland its agitation produced disorder and tumult; that six years after it passed, nearly all the Scotch peers voted for its dissolution, and founded that vote on the discontents it had occasioned; that it remained for a long period a subject of sullen discontent; that a promise of its dissolution was consideredby the agents of the pretender as advantageous to his cause in Scotland, and that two rebellions broke out in that kingdom, subsequent to its accomplishment. Farthermore, from what information we have been able to procure we observe with the deepest concern and alarm, that its discussion in Ireland has already been attended with the most fearful symptoms. From the increased powers with which it has recently been deemed necessary to arm the executive power, we cannot but infer, that the prospect of an incorporating union has failed to conciliate the minds of the disaffected; and from the ferment occasioned by its discussion, it is evident that all other parties in Ireland are alienated or divided, and the means of resistance, in case of insurrection or foreign invasion, thereby materially weakened. We thought it therefore more prudent in this moment of alarm to desist from the prosecution of a measure, which might become a fresh subject of complaint, and a new source of discontent and division. And we were more disposed to seek for the re-establishment of mutual confidence in the adoption of conciliatory laws, in the removal of odious disabilities, in the redress of grievances, and the operation of a milder system of policy on the affections of the Irish people, than in any experiment of theory and nominal union of governments.

5. "Because at a time when the danger of innovation has been deemed a sufficient pretext for the continuation of abuses, the suspension of improvement, and the preservation of a defective representation of the people, we cannot regard without jealousy and alarm an innovation of direct contrary tendency, viz. the introduction of a number of members into the British parliament, from a legislature, one branch of which has acknowledged the imperfection of its own constitution; and against the other branch of which the sale of peerages have been publicly alleged, and as publicly offered to be proved. And, however invidious it might be to cite any example in confirmation of such opinion, we are not so blind to matters of notoriety, or so deaf to the lessons of experience, as not to apprehend from a measure of this nature an enormous increase of the influence of the crown; neither could we perceive, either in the present temper of the Irish people inflamed by civil animosity and exasperated by recent rebellion, or in the general moderation of his majesty's present advisers, any thing to allay

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our apprehensions or relieve our jealousies, and we were unwilling to give our consent, at a period when new burthens are every day imposed, and new sacrifices every day required of the people, to a measure which must supply additional reasons for doubting the adequacy of their representation, and suspecting the independence of parliament.

(Signed) "HOLLAND
"THANET
"KING."

Debate in the Commons on the Address relative to a Union with Ireland.] April 12. The Address of the Lords was communicated to the Commons at a conference, and ordered to be taken into consideration on the 22nd.

April 22. The House proceeded to take the said Address into consideration. The Address having been read twice, Mr. Pitt moved, "That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said Address to be presented to his Majesty." Upon which,

Mr. *Sylvester Douglas* rose and said: Mr. Speaker—I took occasion on a former day to express my humble hope, that if a regular opportunity should again occur, the House would permit me to lay before them some thoughts on this great subject, which have appeared to me worthy of their attention; and to explain some of the grounds on which my opinion has been formed in favour of a union with Ireland. Nobody to whom I am known, will, I am persuaded, impute to me the presumptuous folly of imagining that I have it in my power to improve on what those men of transcendent talents, and eminent political wisdom and experience, who have taken the principal share in the former debates, have advanced on the leading points of this question. But it is a question of such extent, that it may fairly be thought that even yet several important topics remain for consideration, and some new views of those which have been already discussed. It has been for a considerable length of time before the public in both kingdoms: it has given rise to various arguments in both Houses of this and the other parliament: and upon every fresh occasion, additional lights have been thrown upon it, and new difficulties and objections have been raised, by the fertility and eagerness of contest and opposition.

Some of those objections may have seemed plausible or ingenious; scarcely any, I think, have been weighty or substantial; none, I am sure, of sufficient weight to counterbalance the numerous benefits which there is such reason to expect from the adoption of the measure. But they have been frequently suited to meet those passions and prejudices, which naturally exist, or have been artfully excited in our sister kingdom; and, if we feel it our duty, to recommend the proposed incorporation to our fellow subjects there, we owe it to them and to ourselves to spare no pains in the endeavour to remove, by dispassionate reasoning and cool deliberation, such obstacles as may have appeared to them, or any number of them, to stand in the way of what most of us here, I believe, consider as material for our interests and essential to theirs.

To those who have attended to the various modes of resistance to the proposal of a union, which have been resorted to by different persons, two circumstances must have occurred as very remarkable. One has been so well expressed in the resolutions of the grand jury of the county of the city of Cork, that I should do it injustice not to introduce the mention of it in the very language they have used; "Whilst we lament," say they, "that any difference of opinion should exist in this kingdom upon so important a question, we cannot but remember how unanimous the rebellious and traitorous enemies of the country are in their reprobation of the measure." The plan of the United Irishmen, with the assistance of the inveterate foe of the British empire and constitution, is, to effect a separation between Great Britain and Ireland. It is natural, therefore, that they should dread nothing so much as any measure which they must look upon as fatal to that favourite object. That separation is their favourite object, we have many incontestible proofs, but it is sufficient for me now to refer to the declaration of their founder, Tone, subjoined to the Report of the Secret Committee of the Irish House of Lords in 1797; and the detestation of a union, which on that account the same class of men have always expressed is equally notorious. The furious declamations of M'Nevin, Lewins, and others, have been more than once referred to in this place: and within not many weeks from the present moment, some of those self convicted traitors have contrived to publish

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to the world new libels on the government and constitution of their country,* their main view in which has manifestly been, to co-operate to this particular end with those who, though of a very different description, and acting undoubtedly from motives of mistaken patriotism, have exerted their talents and influence to counteract and retard that happy consolidation of the empire which his majesty's paternal goodness has recommended to the consideration of both his parliaments.

The other circumstance is, that the opposers of union have almost all endeavoured to convince us, that the case of the incorporation of Scotland and England in 1707, is not in any degree applicable on the present occasion. I think there is considerable dexterity, though perhaps not a great deal of candour, in this attempt. In all great political operations, experience and historical precedent are the best and safest guides. Those gentlemen have, therefore, justly thought they should have a better chance of gaining their end, if they could induce us to shut our eyes against history, and wander with them in the obscure mazes of theory and speculation. Their ingenuity might then, perhaps, bewilder and perplex us; whereas, if we recur to that memorable event, its similarity to what is now proposed, both in principle and in all its most characteristic features, is so great, that they naturally feel it furnishes, by its complete success, after the trial of a century, the strongest and most irresistible refutation of their arguments.

In the first and preliminary point, for instance, of the question of union, that transaction is most especially applicable, being the direct case of a national decision on the right and competency of parliament. I will not enter at large into the general argument concerning the extraordinary powers of the supreme legislature of a country. It has been amply and ably treated in several of the prior stages of the present business, in this House. If the parliament, in our representative government, is not competent to treat of, and conclude an incorporated union, there is no authority which is; and, consequently, a legitimate union, in such governments, never could take place. The constituent body, or the electors, have no such authority; they have not, by the practice or true theory of our constitution, any power of deliberation on any question whatever; their only business as electors being that of selecting and nominating those whom they think the fittest persons to exercise that share of legislation which is vested in the third estate of parliament: the act of the election is the beginning and end of their functions; the latent political rights of the people at large, whatever they may be, have not been delegated to them; and those gentlemen, on the other side, who are the most strenuous advocates against a union, would, I should think, be very unwilling to devolve that authority which is denied to the elected, on the elective body, as now constituted; since, in their opinion, they ought to be deprived of the very elective franchise itself, by what they call a reform of parliament; the scheme of such reform being, in many instances literally, and virtually in all, to deprive the present electors of that franchise.

But if the electors cannot deliberate and decide on such a measure, much less can the people at large; who never, I believe, in the smallest state, or most complete democracy, have exercised, in fact, by universal individual suffrage, deliberative, judicial, or legislative authority. Yet to maintain that the constitutional legislature of a country has not the right of doing certain acts, however clearly beneficial to that country, without a previous special commission from the mass of the nation, leads immediately to the false and mischievous principle of the direct sovereignty of the people, and to that equally mischievous fiction to which it has given rise, viz. that an original compact between the governors and governed is the only lawful foundation of government. Indeed, to resort to the elementary parts of a nation, the numerical aggregate of individuals composing it, for authority to form an union, would be a complete admission of such sovereignty; as the terms and conditions with which this numerical mass might choose to accompany that delegation of power, would be an exemplification of such original compact. But what sort of philosophy is that, which traces the foundation of all political phenomena to a fact which no history shows ever to have existed, which the consideration of the human character, and the daily transactions, and past and present situations of

* Arthur O'Connor's Letter to lord Castlereagh.—Demonstration, &c. ascribed to Dr. M'Nevin.

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life, demonstrate to be, and always to have been impossible, and every attempt to realize which, either by the Jacquerie in ancient France, the Wat Tylers and Jack Straws in England, or the modern Jacobins, has proved as pernicious and destructive,* as to suppose the possibility of its actual existence, is foolish and absurd. The fatal consequences of such attempts to restore, as it is called, to the people the sovereignty they are imagined to have farmed out, as it were, to their rulers, subject to divers claims of forfeiture and re-entry, has indeed been too well illustrated by the late eventful history of a neighbouring kingdom, for us here, or our fellow subjects in Ireland, to require much argument to convince us of its folly and wickedness. It has in that country overturned the throne of the monarch and the altars of God: it has sanctioned murder, parricide, and regicide; and has taught every illiterate peasant to consider himself as a fit candidate for supreme power, the sovereign of his sovereign, and the lawgiver of mankind—

"Ergo, regibus occisis, subversa jacebat
Pristina majestas soliorum, et sceptra superba
Res itaque ad summam fæcem turbasque redibat."*

I agree with a person justly eminent, when he says, "that it is dangerous in a popular assembly to state that there are points where the powers of the legislature end, and those of the people at large begin."† Indeed, I know of no point where a legitimate constitutional power in the people at large begins: there may be some very special cases to which that of the legislature cannot reach: and in which, according to my conception, when any measure becomes necessary and unavoidable, not the power, i. e. any rightful power of the people, but the dissolution of the constitution and government, will begin; from which anarchy it must be left, in such cases, to chance, to the circumstances of the times, and to the prudence and virtue of individuals possessing influence, either personal or from situation, to extricate the nation. It is indeed delicate and dangerous wantonly to moot such sort of cases; no judge of human nature, who is a friend to his country, ever will; whatever may be his particular creed and party on matters fairly debateable, and open to a safe difference in opinion.

There are, however, cases of another description, which may be more freely discussed, to which also the supreme power of the legislature (in our constitution of the parliament) cannot extend; but which, being of a negative kind, and not requiring any measure to be taken or act done, do not connect themselves with the notion of any necessary dissolution of the frame of the government. They are, in truth, of such a sort, that, on their correct analysis, it will be found, that the idea of the application of that power involves either physical or moral impossibility, or a natural contradiction in the terms of the

* It has been unfortunate for the world, that so great and upright a man as Mr. Locke (led astray by the circumstances of the times in which he lived, and the zeal of controversy) should have been the patron and advocate of this baneful, but, in his hands, too plausible and specious doctrine. Locke's fate has indeed been singular. He was a good subject and a pious Christian. Yet, as his theory of government has served for a basis to the destructive systems of the Condorcets, Priestleys, and Paines, so his metaphysical principles have become the ground-work of the vain wisdom and false philosophy which began by denying the existence of the material world, and proceeded, in the writings of the late Mr. Hume and others, to extend that wild scepticism of an ingenious and well-intentioned prelate (bishop Berkeley) to the disbelief of spirit also, of the immortal nature of man, and the being of God himself. This remark has been, in a great measure, occasioned by my recollection of a truly great philosopher, to whose early lessons and kindness I look back with tenderness and pride, who was among the first to prove that the system adopted by Locke concerning ideas, tended, by its natural consequence, to those of Berkeley and Hume; but who, in announcing that opinion to the world, anxiously disclaimed every wish or intention to disparage the talents of those, the fallacy and danger of whose doctrines he thought he could demonstrate, and every view of arrogating to himself any peculiar sagacity and discernment on that account. Indeed, those who remember him, know that there never was learning and wisdom more free from arrogance and presumption than his. "A traveller," says he, "of good judgment, may mistake his way, and be led unawares into a wrong track; and, while the road is fair before him, may go on without suspicion, and be followed by others; but when it ends in a precipice, it requires no peculiar degree of wisdom and penetration to know he has gone wrong, nor perhaps to find out what misled him."—Dr. Reid's Inquiry into the Human Mind, p. 23.

* Lucret. lib. v, ver. 1135.

† Speech of the right hon. John Foster, p. 108.

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proposition. Two examples, material for the present purpose, especially the last of them, will illustrate the distinction to which I have wished to draw the attention of the House. 1. Parliament cannot pass a law which a subsequent parliament shall not be able to repeal. The plain reason of this is, that the supposition of such a power is contradictory to itself. It is to suppose the parliament of next year less absolute and supreme than the parliament of this. 2. I have heard it contended, not without plausibility, that the parliament cannot dismember the kingdom, or circumscribe the sphere of its own authority; and consequently that, on that account, it cannot dissolve any union which, by treaty or otherwise, has blended into one state, subject to its authority, parts which existed, previous to such treaty, in a separate and distinct condition, with separate legislatures; that to suppose it capable of doing this, is also a contradiction in terms; that the nation and its parliament are each indivisible integral parts, the one governed, the other governing, and forming together one indivisible aggregate or body politic; that if you detach any part of this body, what remains is no longer the same state, the same nation, the same legislature or parliament; that the two parts may form themselves again, each or either, into a similar constitution to what before existed, or into other constitutions; but that the dismemberment will have effected that sort of resolution of the aggregate into its elements, which is known to happen in our municipal law, when, by the loss of an integral part, an ordinary corporation is dissolved, and loses its corporate existence; that it is universally true, that the dismemberment of any legitimate state cannot be a legitimate act of that state; but necessarily supposes, even on cessions in virtue of conquest, exchange, &c. a disruption of the integrity of the state; that it might be difficult to argue his position on the history of those ill-constructed constitutions where dismemberment has in fact often taken place, or with regard to extreme cases, of the cession of small insignificant portions of a large dominion; but that nobody will say that the actual state and constitution of Great Britain would remain, if the county of Northumberland or Cornwall, the ancient kingdom of Scotland, or the principality of Wales, were detached from it.

But, in the case of an union, and incorporation of new parts, the incompetency of parliament to decompose them is, I think, abundantly obvious, without adopting the foregoing opinion to its full extent, which I by no means do, with regard to the dismemberment of some original fraction, or district, of what had always constituted one and the same state. The essential condition of such a union is the combination of each of the constituent parts into a new whole, in which the identical characters and qualities of those parts are so lost as that they can no where afterwards be found or restored. The contracting parties cease to exist, and become incapable of being revived. It is as impossible to replace them in statu quo, as it would be to recover the identical parts of two images of the same metal, which may have been melted together, and cast into one new figure made up of both. Physically, or even morally and politically speaking, Scotland, as a country, might be again disjoined from England: it might again have parliaments, as England might have; but this must be by a process exactly the same with that which should separate Cornwall, Norfolk, Caithness, or Sutherland, from Great Britain. It would not be a redintegration or restoration of Scotland to her former state, as she existed before 1707: that state has been melted down, and indissolubly mingled with that of England, which, in like manner, can never become a separate kingdom, as of its ancient right.

If this reasoning is as just and correct as it appears to me, all apprehensions and alarms must necessarily vanish (alarms sometimes attempted to be raised when it has been thought they might assist a little dearth of argument), of Great Britain assuming a right to break through, and set aside, at her pleasure, any incorporation of this kingdom and that of Ireland, which the wisdom and patriotism of the two parliaments may adopt. After a union, Ireland may again be separated from Great Britain, as England may be torn asunder from Scotland, by domestic faction and civil war, or by foreign hostility; but they never can be disjoined by any regular act of the united government and legislature. In short, it appears to me that a common parliament, such as was formed on the Scotch union, and must be in contemplation now, must have the power of altering or repealing any of the former acts of either of the local legislatures, i. e. either English or

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Scotch, British or Irish, a power daily exercised in regard to English and Scotch acts made previous to 1707; but that such common parliament cannot legitimately repeal or alter any of the fundamental and essential clauses, articles, or conditions of that treaty, by which the union shall be constituted; since the treaty authorised by each legislature, concluded by commissioners, and then again ratified by each legislature, when carried into effect will render it impossible, upon any breach, for either party to resume its former situation, and avail itself of the nullity thereby occasioned; and of course impossible, consistently with moral right and duty, for the united parliament, *i. e.* beyond its legitimate powers, to commit such a breach.

Before I proceed, the House will permit me to explain what may otherwise be liable to misrepresentation or misconstruction. Though I have denied the strict right of the constituent body to deliberate and decide on political questions, and either to limit or extend, by special commission and instructions, the powers vested by law in their representatives, yet I am very clearly of opinion, that the representative does not perform his duty, or consult the true interests of his country, who does not pay a due and respectful attention to the sentiments, and even, in many cases, to the inclinations and wishes of his particular constituents. and of the proprietors and inhabitants of the place he represents (with whom he commonly has the easiest means of communication), as well as to the opinions which prevail in general among the different classes of his fellow-subjects. It is very true that there neither exists, nor can exist, any legal or formal method of collecting the individual opinions and suffrages of a whole nation: still, however, the predominant sentiment will force its way to the observation and understanding of the legislators, and will be in many, perhaps in most cases, the best and most prudent guide for them to follow. If they neglect it, the period of re-election enables the voters (the majority of whom, even as now constituted in this kingdom, taking the whole country over, will, I believe, always be found to accord with the majority of the nation itself) to select others who think more as they do on those subjects of public concern which they have nearest their hearts.

After all, some may think I might have spared the House and myself the trouble of the foregoing discussion, as few, very few, within these walls, have gone so far as directly to maintain the general incompetence of parliament to such a measure as a union. But several, by expressions of doubt and surmise, by ambiguous words, scattered abroad at the risk of misleading the vulgar, the ill-informed, or ill-disposed, among his majesty's subjects in Ireland, have set out with involving their opinion on this material point in oracular obscurity, and have then gone on to assert, that whatever may have been the right of the English or of the Scotch parliament in 1707, a union between Great Britain and Ireland, or, at least, such a union as is supposed to be intended, cannot be lawfully agreed to or carried into effect by either of the parliaments of those respective kingdoms. They assume, as the case I think must be, that in the minds of those who have proposed, or are friends to the measure, the proportion of members to be sent by Ireland to the united parliament is meant to be considerably less than the number of British members: which, if the example of the Scotch union shall be followed in this particular, will remain as at present. "This," it is said, "would, in effect, amount to a total surrender of the legislative authority of Ireland to Great Britain. But the constituents of the Irish parliament delegated to their representatives the powers with which they invested them, for the purpose of exercising, not of surrendering, those powers, for the purpose of maintaining a supreme, independent, and exclusive legislature for Ireland, not to enable them to betray and destroy the independency, or rather the existence of the Irish legislature. This," it is alleged, "must be the case, if the members for Ireland are in a great disproportion to those for Great Britain. Though the British parliament, therefore, should be supposed competent to receive, in accession to its legislative authority over Great Britain, the like power over Ireland, the Irish parliament can have no right to bestow that power, and subject their country, in that manner, to the government of a foreign legislature. The addition of one-sixth, one-fifth, or one-fourth, to the present aggregate number of British members, will leave the British parliament as exclusively supreme over Great Britain as before, and will, at the

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same time, communicate to Great Britain as entire a supremacy over Ireland as she formerly claimed (before the epoch of 1782) when that country was totally unrepresented in Great Britain."

In stating this sort of argument, which I have endeavoured not to weaken or misrepresent, the case of Scotland seemed to militate so strongly both against the conclusion of incompetency, and the assumed fact from which that conclusion is drawn, namely, the exercise of exclusive power by the greater over the lesser country, that every effort of ingenuity has been used, though unsuccessfully, to find out some intelligible ground of distinction between that transaction and the measure now in agitation.

1st. With regard to the fact. It is a matter of such acknowledged notoriety, that in questions of a local nature, or which nearly concern the northern division of this united kingdom, the members returned by Scotland have generally influenced the opinion and vote of the whole House of Commons, that the gentlemen on the other side have not been able to deny it. They have, therefore, been obliged to content themselves with the hope that this, like other circumstances relative to the Scotch union, may may be ascribed to something of a mysterious and undefinable nature, peculiar to the character and situation of that people; and they insist, that whatever may have in practice counteracted the natural consequence of the superiority of numbers in that case, it is not less certain that the whole legislative authority over Scotland is vested in the English members, than that 513 is a larger number than 45.

2nd. As to the conclusion, they argue, that if the surrender (as they insist on terming it) which was made by the Scotch parliament has not vitiated the whole transaction, it is either because the lapse of time and long acquiescence on the part of that country have, by a sort of prescription, confirmed the authority of the parliament now denominated British, but still, in effect, only English, over Scotland; or because the Scotch parliament was expressly empowered and commissioned by the constituents in that kingdom to agree to an union.

In answer to these refinements it may be observed.

1. That it is a new sort of prescription which can confirm or render valid, what, in its commencement, was a mere nullity; especially where the acts by which this nullity has been turned into a right, must, if the argument is well founded, have been throughout equally null and void. If the Scotch parliament could not, in 1707, legally ratify the treaty of union, the act by which they purported to do so was void: and the royal assent which was given to that act, having nothing on which it could operate, was void also; as much so as it would have been if given to an act by which the parliament had attempted to legislate for France or Italy. But the ratification of the treaty by the Scotch parliament was the essential condition on which that of England ratified it. If, therefore, the act of the Scotch parliament was a nullity, so also must have been that which was only passed on the faith of its supposed validity. The one was the consideration for the other; and if England could receive nothing, neither could she mean to give, nor could give any thing; and the whole business resembled, on her part, what the lawyers call a *nudum pactum*. Thus this doctrine necessarily leads to the inference, that the present legislature of this country has no legitimate authority; that the powers it exercises are mere usurpation; and that no man, either in Scotland or England, is bound to submit to any of the laws which have been enacted for near a century.

2. When, perceiving that this argument of acquiescence fails by leading to such a dangerous absurdity, gentlemen resort to some supposed special delegation from the people or constituent body to the parliament of Scotland, it will be recollected, as I have already shown, that the electors could not, by the constitution—in this respect the same in that kingdom as in England—make any such delegation, so as to give it any force or validity; nor grant to the elected any peculiar powers, not incident to the mere character of representatives duly chosen. I will now prove, that in 1707 no such delegation was in fact attempted in Scotland. There is undoubtedly a passage or two in De Foe's History of the Union, which seems to indicate something special in the appointment, of the members of the parliament of Scotland, which concluded that treaty; and a supposed specific authority, in that instance has been much relied on. This circumstance induced me to bestow some pains in the investigation of the

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matter, the result of which has been, that no such authority was in contemplation, much less required or conferred, at the time of electing that parliament. In the several treaties preceding that which so happily accomplished the object, from the accession of James the 6th of Scotland to the crown of England downwards, no idea of the necessity, expediency, or, I may say, constitutionally speaking, of the possibility of such a reference to and delegation from the freeholders and burgesses,—forming themselves, as they must have done, into what, in the modern French vocabulary, would be called *primary assemblies*,— ever seems to have been entertained by any projector, politician, lawyer, member of parliament, minister, or sovereign whatever.

I will now, Sir, shortly state what really happened in Scotland on the occasion of the last and successful treaty. The Convention parliament, or estates, which had been assembled in that country on the abdication, or forfeiture, of James, and had met early in 1689, continued undissolved through all the reign of king William, and were summoned to meet by queen Anne on the 9th of June 1702, a few months after her accession. The anomalous formation of those estates is well known; and it will not be pretended, that any measure of union between the two kingdoms was, at the time of their nomination, either agitated by the represented, or given in charge to their representatives. The sixth English parliament of king William, which had been called by the usual process (no special authority being pretended as to England), was sitting on queen Anne's accession; and on the 6th May 1702, had passed an act, enabling the queen to appoint commissioners for treating of a union between England and Scotland. As soon as the Scotch parliament met after king William's death, this circumstance was communicated to them in a letter from the queen, and a similar measure, on their part, recommended, and, in consequence thereof, a like act was passed on the 23rd June 1702. Commissioners were accordingly appointed on the part of each kingdom, and met at Westminster on the 27th Oct. 1702. In the mean time the Scotch parliament, or Convention, was prorogued (30th June), and soon afterwards dissolved, as was the English parliament on the 2nd July 1702. But the commissions were not to determine by this dissolution of the respective parliaments, but to continue in force; and such treaty as the commissioners might conclude was to be ratified by the subsequent parliaments of each kingdom.

From the above deduction it is clear, that if those commissioners had in fact proceeded to the conclusion of a treaty, no surmise could ever have been made, that on the part of Scotland any special mandate had served as a foundation for the powers exercised on the occasion. A new parliament was soon afterwards called, in the usual way, in England, and met on the 20th Oct. 1702, a week previous to the meeting of the commissioners. On the 8th September a royal proclamation was published in Scotland, containing the following words: "Whereas the late parliament of that our ancient kingdom of Scotland is by our authority dissolved, and considering that we are engaged at present in a most just and necessary war; and that by acts passed both in the parliament of England and Scotland, we are empowered, and have accordingly nominated commissioners to treat of a union betwixt these our kingdoms, and of other things, matters, and causes relating thereto, conform to the tenors of the said acts, the conclusion of which union to be established and ratified in both parliaments, will undoubtedly conduce to the lasting peace and welfare of both kingdoms; for which causes, and that we judge it necessary there should be a parliament in being to meet on such occasions as may require it, we have thought fit to call a parliament of that our kingdom, to meet at our city of Edinburgh on the 12th of November next."

This passage, in an instrument of which, after a good deal of research, I have been furnished with a copy by the obliging attention of the gentleman who has the care of the public records at Edinburgh, is the only circumstance and source to which I can trace the supposition of the alleged special authority of which I have been speaking. I think it is no injustice to the gentlemen who have pleaded that special authority, to suppose they had conceived it to rest upon some more solid and tenable ground. Indeed, I have not met with any evidence that they, or any writer or compiler, on the present occasion, had taken the pains I have been prompted to do (in order to sift every point of this great question as thoroughly as I could), with regard to the proceed-

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ing which may have given rise to the passages I have referred to in De Foe. But it is no wonder the sort of argument there stated is so loosely, generally, and shortly expressed, and that so little attention seems to have been paid to it at the time, or by that very historian. Was the mention made of the war, in the same proclamation, a special or necessary notice to the electors of Scotland to instruct their representatives how they were to act in the ensuing parliament, as to granting or refusing supplies? If it had been all at once discovered, that all former parliaments which had entertained the question of union had exceeded the power and authority incident to their constitution, would there not have been some more solemn and specific recital to that effect in the proclamation itself? Would that subject have been lumped, as it were, with so common and usual a cause for holding a parliament as the circumstance of a war? Would not the proclamation have proceeded to give new and peculiar directions for the method of communicating to the electors the notice that they were to exercise a novel and extraordinary sort of deliberation, and to communicate a new power to the elected, not necessarily vested in them by the act of election and consequent commission, appointing them members of the legislature? Would not the proceedings at the subsequent elections, the summons, the returns, or, as they were called, and were in fact in Scotland, the commissions of the persons chosen, have contained some reference to the subject? Would not the minutes of the election meetings, whether of counties or burghs, which in that country are drawn up with so much form and precision, have recorded the especial object and purpose for calling the parliament, and the instructions on that account given by each body of constituents? Would there have been no trace of any thing of that sort among the entries in the corporation books of Edinburgh, or of the other cities, towns, and boroughs of the kingdom? Would there not have been some tradition, some memorial, some narrative, or some hint of a formal, or at least of some incidental allusion to the subject of union at some of the elections —of some contest founded on the known or declared opinions of different candidates, for or against the measure? And, lastly, would not the very act of the Scotch parliament, which ratified the treaty, have recited the special power which alone warranted them in that act, and which their general character as a parliament did not authorize? Now, Sir, not one of those circumstances exists. The proclamation gives no particular direction as to the elections. The summonses for election, the commissions, the minutes, the corporation books, bear no marks or signs of any thing special. History, memoirs, tradition, are all silent; and the act of the Scotch parliament is equally so.

It is hardly necessary to wind up the narrative I have been giving, by stating that the commissioners who met by virtue of the two acts of 1702, never came to any conclusive treaty or agreement. Their meetings were finally adjourned on the 3rd Feb. 1703. The new Scotch parliament did not meet till the 6th May 1703. On the 9th Sept. 1703, they voted, that "the commission of parliament," as they called it, was terminate and extinct; and that there should be no new one without the consent of parliament. In February 1704-5, the English parliament passed a new act, empowering the queen to appoint commissioners, when a similar act should have passed the parliament of Scotland. On the 5th April 1705, that first English parliament of queen Anne was dissolved, and the new one met on the 27th October. In the mean time, after a great deal of angry proceedings in the parliament of Scotland during their first and second session, in the third, which began on the 28th June 1705, an act also passed, authorising the queen to appoint commissioners. Under these two acts new commissions issued; that for Scotland on the 27th Feb. 1705-6, and that for England on the 10th April 1706. The commissioners met at Whitehall on the 16th of that month: on the 22nd of July the articles were executed; on the 16th of January 1706-7, they were ratified by an act of the Scotch parliament; and on the 6th March of the same year, by the English statute of 5th Anne, cap. 8; and the union took effect on the 1st of May 1707.

Sir, I did, in a prior debate, advert to the authority of several eminent persons in Ireland, on this question of the competency of their parliament; and referred to a debate in the Irish House of Lords, in which the lord chancellor, the two chief justices, and the chief baron had voted, and three of them spoke in support of its

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competency. What I then said has been misunderstood. I have been supposed not only to have asserted what I have just mentioned, and (which I also admit I did) that Mr. Foster and sir John Parnell had avoided giving their sanction to the contrary doctrine, but to have added, with some exultation, that there had nobody been found to maintain it but M'Nevin and Lewins. Sir, that is not what I stated. I did perhaps discover the satisfaction I felt from the consideration that the distinguished characters I have mentioned had supported that side of the question which I thought was necessarily connected both with the general principles of government and those of the British constitution; but I never said, or meant to say, that no opinion had been delivered of an opposite sort by any body in Ireland, except M'Nevin and Lewins. It was therefore unnecessary to question me, whether I did not know in particular that three considerable lawyers, and members of the Irish parliament, had denied this competency; and whether I doubted of their legal learning and abilities? I dare say they have denied it. I have indeed read, in a printed letter, to which the name of one of those gentlemen is subscribed, "That the parliament of Ireland, true to itself, and honest to its country, will never assume a power extrinsic of its delegation." (Mr. Barrington's letter to Mr. Saurin, dated 20th January, 1799.) Similar sentiments may have been delivered by the other two, and by others in the sister parliament; and as to the legal abilities and acquirements of those gentlemen, far be it from me to express or entertain any opinion to their disparagement. But, Sir, I am persuaded those gentlemen themselves would not think it implied any disrespect to them, as members of the profession to which I once had the honour to belong, if I were now to say, that the opinions of barristers, however able or eminent, are not, in point of authority, to be put in the balance, on a great constitutional point, with those of the heads of his majesty's supreme tribunals, the fathers and oracles of the law; especially when those great judicial stations are so filled as they at present are.

But is it true that, with a disproportion of members, such as it may be supposed will be settled between the two countries, Ireland would only *give*, and Great Britain only *acquire*? I speak now of legislative authority. In my judgment quite otherwise. There would be a reciprocal, and, having regard to the respective weight of each in the scale of empire, an equal communication of power. The Lords and Commons of Great Britain would indeed acquire a direct share in the legislation of Ireland, but so would the Lords and Commons of Ireland in that of Great Britain. Mutually they would relinquish, or, if gentlemen like a more exceptionable word better, would surrender, the exclusive jurisdiction over their respective countries; but each would obtain a share, commensurate with its relative importance in the united state, of the supreme dominion over the whole; and, therefore, as to the distinction attempted on the question of right, how can it be contended that the British parliament may lawfully receive within its bosom, say 80, 100, or 120 strangers, vesting them individually with the same authority as its original members individually possessed, if the Irish parliament cannot, on the condition of participating, according to due proportion, in the government of Great Britain and the empire, lawfully admit the legislators of this island and of the empire to a share, adjusted by the same rule of proportion, in the local government of Ireland? The idea that inequality of numbers would vitiate the transaction on the side of the weakest country, leads to this, that there could never be a lawful union, unless the numbers in the united legislature were made arithmetically equal on both sides. If so, had England agreed to the unreasonable demand, during the last century, on the part of Scotland (in 1660) of joining the two parliaments according to their then existing numbers, or were Great Britain now to receive into her House of Commons all the 300 representatives of Ireland, and to unite together the two Houses of Peers as they now stand, the transaction would still have no legal solidity; the Scotch parliament formerly, and the Irish parliament now, would still have betrayed their trusts.

But this junction of the parliaments, this identification or incorporation of the two Houses of each, in analogy to the identity which already exists as to the third estate, is treated as an utter annihilation of the constitution of Ireland. The same terms were misapplied in Scotland to the union of that country with this; for, ingenious and inventive in arguments on most subjects as some of our opponents

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are, on many of the points of this question they appear to me mere plagiarists, to a degree of servility, not only of the topics, but even of the very language and expressions which were then employed. Of this any man may convince himself by comparing the late debates here and elsewhere, with the History of De Foe, and the Memoirs of Lockhart. In the case of Scotland and England, the misapplication was not so great. In that case, the third branch of each legislature, though for the time it centered in the same person, was so far from being inseparably mixed, so as to form one indivisible whole, that a law actually existed,* by which its separation, at no distant period, into two distinct sovereignties, was expressly established.

It were to be wished, that gentlemen would explain what that essential part of the constitution of Ireland is, which the incorporation of its Lords and Commons with ours will annihilate. It has always appeared to me, that in two principles is comprehended the essence of ours and of the Irish constitution, which, with the exception of certain abuses, real or imputed, of different sorts to be found in each kingdom, is one and the same. How often have I heard gentlemen in the Irish parliament boast that they enjoyed, how often read in the published harangues and essays of Irish politicians, their exultation in the possession of the British constitution! I say, I have always conceived, that the most essential principles of that constitution are two: 1. That it is composed of three independent estates or branches, forming checks, each upon the other two. 2. That no law can pass, affecting the life, the liberty, or property of the subject, without the concurrence of a representative body, chosen from among the people, in a mode formed on the consideration of property and franchise, and consisting of an adequate number of persons; and of such a mixed description, as to bring to the legislative assemblies competent knowledge, both of general and local concerns, and a sympathy of interest in regard to every thing that can affect their constituents and the nation at large. Now, Sir, if this description is in any degree true, how can it be said, that the combining into one supreme imperial council a just number of the representatives of both nations for one House, and of the peers for the other, will be the annihilation of the constitution? The legislature of the empire may, in one point of view, be considered as one great political machine; consisting of one and the same supreme head, both executive and legislative; to which are attached, or linked and knit, two separate members, while each of those two is subdivided again into two analogous parts: the one member, the Lords and Commons of Great Britain, empowered to prepare for the sovereign's deliberation, sanction, or rejection, whatever may seem necessary for Great Britain, and for the empire at large; the other, the Lords and Commons of Ireland, possessing only, but exclusively—as far as such exclusion is consistent with the idea of a unity of empire, either on the present or any other possible frame of such a machine—the same power as to the kingdom of Ireland. Let me ask, whether this machine, considered theoretically at least, would not be simplified, its structure improved, and the two essential objects I have pointed out, better secured, by blending and incorporating, in a fit proportion, the two separate members into one.

But, Sir, after making the best stand they can on this quicksand of incompetency, the gentlemen proceed to the real merits of the question, and expressly deny that Ireland will reap any benefit from the measure; meaning, I suppose, also to deny, that it will prove beneficial to this country, or to the empire at large. I suppose they mean this, because I think that no man of good sense, or who is a real friend to Ireland, can disjoin her interests from those of this kingdom, and of the other parts of the British dominions, or contend that any great arrangement is unadvisable and unjust, which shall tend to the general advantage of those other branches of the empire, merely because no particular advantage may accrue to Ireland, provided that country is not thereby exposed to some detriment or danger. Let us, therefore, examine a few of the most prominent circumstances of advantage which may be reasonably expected to flow from a union, in the first place, *to Great Britain*, and to *the rest of his majesty's dominions*; but, secondly, *to Ireland*;—considering the subject in a general view of legislative and executive government, of commerce, manufactures,

* The Scotch act of Anne, called the Act of Security, 1st parliament of queen Anne, 2nd ses. c. 3.

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and agriculture, of internal peace, civilization, and prosperity; under which heads we may also discuss some of the principal objections which have been relied on, either here or in the sister country.

With regard to *this country*, its legislative and executive councils would no longer be liable to be perplexed in consequence of the distinct machinery of a separate Irish parliament, nor the general government continue in constant danger of misapprehension and disputes, and subject to the inconveniences which inevitably arise from circuity of communication, and the impediments and embarrassing modifications to which jealousy or ignorance on the one side or the other will so often give occasion (while things remain as they are) in many of the most important concerns of the empire. In other respects it may be difficult to foresee any immediate advantage to Great Britain; to her manufactures, her agriculture, her trade, or general prosperity. Some people, indeed, rather apprehend danger to British commerce and manufactures; and that supposed migration of capital and skill to a cheaper country, to a country possessing a superiority of situation as to many branches of business which has been often the subject of public discussion, is argued upon as a too probable consequence of a union. (Mr. Peel's speech). To this it might be a sufficient answer for the statesman to say, that if what one part of the united kingdom shall lose another will gain, there will be no public detriment to the whole. But that answer, I own, sounds harsh to my ears. I think you ought not, on such general considerations of policy, to overlook the feelings and interests of the numerous individuals and classes of men, who have, as it were, localized their ingenuity, their industry, their wealth, and their habits of life, under the countenance and implied faith of pre-existing laws and institutions. There is a better answer, I believe, in the fact, that capital and industry so localized are not easily influenced at once to change their situation, by such temptations. The attempts which have been made, at various times, to transfer, by some sudden effort of speculation and enterprise, English money and credit, and English art and skill, to cheaper and more eligible places in Scotland, Wales, and even Ireland, have rarely been successful, or persevered in; and it is no inconsiderable illustration and proof of this position, that even with regard to external trade, which is certainly more locomotive than manufactures, those towns and ports where accident at first, and a long series of causes afterwards, have operated to establish it, are seldom or never out-rivalled, or their commerce drawn off, by any exertions, however powerful, in favour of situations better adapted by nature for carrying it on. Gradually, however, after a union, Ireland will undoubtedly attract much wealth, capital, and credit from this country, not only by the circumstances of advantage to which I have alluded, but also, more especially, because a uniformity of laws and legislature will give greater confidence to those who may be disposed to embark in enterprises of speculation, or place their money on commercial or landed securities in that kingdom. This, one should think, would be a strong and reasonable argument for Ireland (of which afterwards); but such gradual benefit to be reaped by her, will not affect the interests of individuals now engaged in business here, and will unquestionably, from the known principles and history of public wealth, tend in its progress, by multiplying intercourse, and the returns of profit in and between both countries, to increase the riches of both, and of the whole empire.

Let us now give a moment's consideration to the effects of the proposed union on that *empire*, as an aggregate of which, Great Britain and Ireland form the two chief and preponderating members. And here, Sir, it will be enough just to observe, what no man, I think, can deny, that in all cases where it is practicable, one general, superintending, and controlling legislature, is the best fitted for the steady, consistent, and rational government of all the parts of that combination of individuals and territories which constitute what is denominated a state. To endeavour to enforce this position by a long train of argument, indisputable as I conceive it to be, would be an unwarrantable waste of time and words. It has, indeed, been said, in answer to those who have pointed out the obvious inconvenience which might arise from a difference of opinion on any great imperial question, as of peace and war, between two distinct parliaments, that equal inconvenience would follow from a difference of a like sort between the several branches of the same parliament; but that such differences, though they may be suggested by theory, have not been found to happen in

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practice. [Mr. Foster's speech, p. 54, 55.] They certainly sometimes have happened, both between the two Houses, and between those Houses and the sovereign, in the British parliament, and with the hazard, at least, of considerable detriment to the state. But there are material distinctions between the two cases. The identity of interest between the several branches of the legislative and executive government of the same country, is much more direct and sensible, and therefore, on discussion, much less apt to be mistaken by either, than what exists between two kingdoms, though forming parts of the same empire; besides, there is a facility of discussion and explanation, by conference, address, remonstrance, &c. between the respective branches of the same parliament, which cannot take place between two distinct legislatures.

It is also said, that the checks which the proceedings of the three branches of the same parliament produce, furnish a principle to which our constitution owes its stability, and that similar checks exist between the two sister parliaments. [Mr. Foster's speech, p. 55]. No doubt this is true to a certain extent; but it would be easy to show, that in the case of the two parliaments such checks exist in a very imperfect degree, without any foundation in their formal and legal constitutions,* and with little more force or efficacy than those which prevail in the relations of different states, having common interests, but no link or connexion in their governments. Such checks between the different nations of our part of the globe, contributed for a time to maintain what used to be called the balance of Europe; but although those of a more substantial and operative kind, in concurrence with other causes, have to this day preserved, and, I trust, if perpetuity can belong to human institutions, will ever preserve our frame of government, the other and inferior sort has not been found of equal power in giving permanency to that balance. I admit that circumstances of distance (there may be others) are sometimes such as to render so desirable an object as one common imperial legislature impracticable. Such I take to have been the case with regard to our colonies in North America. I believe all sober men of all parties, would have agreed, that, could it have been done, the admission into the British parliament of an adequate number of representatives from thence, would have been the happiest method of reconciling the disputes and removing the difficulties which terminated in a civil war, and the separation of that country from the empire. Dr. Adam Smith, and many others, recommended the experiment. The immense distance, and the uncertainty of regular, periodical, frequent, and early communication between American representatives in Great Britain and their constituents in America, seem to me to have opposed insurmountable obstacles to such a plan. But that no valid objection of a like nature exists in the case of Ireland, is abundantly manifest. Some gentlemen, indeed, of that country, have expressed, in very strong language, their ideas of the inconvenience which would attend what they quaintly term a transmarine parliament; and one learned barrister, at the celebrated meeting of the profession which took place early in Dublin, is stated to have pronounced, "That a British minister shall not, and cannot, plant another Sicily in the bosom of the Atlantic, and that God and nature never intended that Ireland should be a province."* If by this is meant, that the intervening channel is, in the nature of things, an insuperable difficulty in the way of a legislative union; I answer, that in principle (however widely the cases differ in importance), the reason would equally apply to the islands of Orkney and Shetland, and would have applied, in former times, to the town of Calais. As to the idea, that Ireland, by a union, will become a province, in any other sense than that according to which she and Great Britain are now provinces of the general empire, I deny it. Ireland, indeed, will no longer be a distinct kingdom; but neither will Great Britain; they will both become, as it were, aliquot parts of one incorporated realm, instead of remaining separate integral parts of the empire. It is true, that the interposition of

* This is not inconsistent with what is afterwards said of the jurisdiction the British parliament may exercise over the executive ministers who advise the king in assenting to, or rejecting Irish bills. That jurisdiction is without power to stop such assent or rejection; and, therefore, forms no immediate or absolute check, though it may afterwards punish those who have advised the crown to give or refuse its assent.

* Debates of the Irish Bar, 9th December 1798, p. 47.

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the sea forms a geographical separation between them, which did not exist in the case of England and Scotland; but, on the other hand, Dublin is nearer to London than Edinburgh is; and the journey, notwithstanding the sea passage, is, I believe, in general, performed in a shorter time; Cork, Limerick, and Londonderry, are nearer to it than several of the principal towns in the north of Scotland; and no part of Ireland is so far removed from this city as the counties of Sutherland and Caithness; not to mention again the Orkney and the Shetland islands. Besides, it is to be observed. that Great Britain is the only neighbour of Ireland, and that, while the eastern coast of Scotland is open to a near and easy intercourse with other countries, Great Britain intercepts almost entirely all direct communcation between Ireland and the continent of Europe, while the immense expanse of the Atlantic divides that island from all other parts of the globe. If we add to these considerations the many and important facilities, or rather invitations, to a more thorough incorporation of England and Ireland—and which now must comprehend Scotland—that did not exist in the former case; the same system of laws, civil and commercial; the same rules of property; similar tribunals; corresponding forms of legislature; a common origin; extensive consanguinity, and intermarriages; the great number of those who, by succession or acquisition, are daily becoming owners of land in both kingdoms; the same established religion; the same course of education, &c. &c.;—if we consider all these circumstances, that of absolute territorial contiguity seems to be infinitely outweighed, and, as it were, totally to vanish from our sight.

Having incidentally cleared away, as I, flatter myself I have, this objection of the want of immediate juxta-position, I shall not, for the present, revert to any farther examination of more general, or, as they are often called, imperial considerations; but will now proceed to take a view of some of the peculiar benefits which I think *Ireland* would derive from the proposed arrangement. At present, she has no share whatever in the legislation of Great Britain, nor in that of the empire. Her parliament can take no part in the regulations necessary for the government and administration of our foreign possessions in the East and West Indies, in Asia, Africa, or America, of those in the Mediterranean, or even of those in her own immediate neighbourhood, in St. George's Channel, or on the western coast of France. Is any one so ignorant as not to perceive how materially such regulations may affect the commercial and political interests of Ireland? On the admission of her representatives among those of this island, she will immediately acquire her proportionate share in all those great concerns; a voice in the legislative government of Great Britain, and of every part of the British dominions. This is not all; Ireland will not only have this share of general legislation through the influence and suffrages of her own immediate representatives: she will also be represented and entitled to speak through the influence and suffrages of every one of the 513 members chosen in this island. This was ably pointed out in a former debate, by a gentleman (Mr. Peel), who, on that occasion, discovered the most enlarged and liberal views of general policy, united to the soundest speculative as well as practical knowledge of commerce and manufactures.

And here we may perceive the gross fallacy of the idea which so often mixes itself in these debates, and has, as we have seen, been founded on in the argument of incompetency, viz. that the concerns of Ireland will be solely and exclusively attended to, and this too on a principle of opposition and hostility, by the smaller number of members which she will have to choose. It will, on the contrary, be then the duty, and on all great points will, I am satisfied be the desire and the true interest of those elected here, to give their due weight to the interests, general or local, of Ireland, in their deliberations and in their votes; and in cases where they do not, I am apt to believe, what respects Ireland will be wholly left to the decision of the Irish members, as I have already observed to have happened so generally in regard to the Scotch members of the British parliament, when the subject before the legislature has merely related to Scotland. Natural and fair reasons for this, and equally applicable to Ireland, might easily be stated; but it is enough here to appeal to the fact, which has been so notorious, that when my right hon. friend asked in a former debate, whether Scotland had, in consequence of her comparatively small number of forty-five members, been oppressed or taxed beyond her proportion

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since the union? the mere supposition, so contrary to experience, forced a smile from the gentlemen on the other side of the House.

But, as I have just said, every individual in the united parliament will, in principle, and as a duty, have vested in him a portion of British and also a portion of Irish representation, and this in the ratio of the comparative weight and importance of the two countries in the general scale; and do not let gentlemen pay so poor a compliment to the candour and wisdom of British legislators as to think they will either supinely or partially shut out from their minds important objects which may more immediately concern Ireland, but the decision on which cannot but also affect the welfare of the whole united kingdom. Many, indeed, chosen for Great Britain will feel even personal motives as strong or stronger for looking to the advantage of Ireland as for consulting that of this country. Have we, for instance, any reason to suppose that the hon. member for Stafford (Mr. Sheridan), if he should happily fail, as I trust he will, in the object of his present mistaken zeal, and the union should be established, will be a less vigilant guardian of the privileges and interests of his native land, than of those of the country he has thought fit to adopt? Or will a native of Great Britain, if he happens also to be a merchant principally engaged in Irish commerce, and looking to that country as the source of his wealth and fortune; will the opulent English mortgagee of an estate in Ireland (of which description some, I believe, have now seats in that House), will men of that sort, members chosen for British seats, to the united parliament, be apt to overlook that part of their duty which they will owe to the sister island? Such gentlemen are even now prompt enough, and I mention it to their honour, to speak as if they already represented Ireland here. But, as matters stand, they can hardly do so constitutionally, and certainly not effectually. If a union take place, such a conduct will be at once reconcileable to their inclination, their rights, and their duty.

Sir, it has been a very common objection in Ireland to measures affecting that country undertaken by the government here, that ministers in London, with all the opportunities their stations may furnish, and their sense of duty urge them to improve, have not the means of acquiring such an habitual and detailed knowledge of the characters, circumstances, and interests of that kingdom, as would have been necessary to enable them to have judged with sufficient certainty of the justice or policy of such measures. I do not mean here to refer to those persons in that kingdom who have borrowed from the phraseology of their predecessors in Scotland the inflammatory and inapplicable terms of *foreign* government, *foreign* cabinet, *foreign* ministers, &c. I speak of many men firmly attached to the connexion with Britain and the interests of the empire, and who consider Irishmen and Britons not as foreigners to each other, but as friends and countrymen living under the allegiance of the same sovereign, and entitled reciprocally to all the privileges—I was going to say of citizenship, but that word has been profaned,—of natural born-subjects, in either kingdom. Men even of that description are not unfrequently heard to say, "The government in England is unacquainted with the concerns and the people of this country. They seldom interfere without doing harm. Why do they not leave us to ourselves."

It is needless to argue the obvious inadmissibility of the conclusion thus drawn from premises concerning the truth of which it is not my business to inquire. The administrators of the supreme superintending government of the empire, in all its parts, must reside near the person of the sovereign. But though we cannot give way to the principle, it does not follow that the facts may not, in some instances, have proved more or less true. Now, Sir, the incorporation of the legislatures would, I think, by the frequent presence of the Irish peers and commoners at the seat of general government, afford a perfect cure to this evil. Men thoroughly acquainted with all the affairs of that kingdom; natives, probably, of all or most of the different cities and counties; persons possessing property, engaged in trade and manufactures, or exercising professions over the whole extent of the country, would be then, during the sitting of parliament, ready on the spot to represent to the ministers, or even submit directly to the sovereign: and when the occasion called on them, in the different stages of any measure, or on the first pressure of any emergency, would have it in their power to bring before the eyes of the impartial legislature itself, and sup-

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port in both Houses, by their weight, their talents, and their suffrages, whatever their duty to their country, or to their immediate constituents, might seem to require.

But the most seducing topic with the vulgar, and with some also in Ireland of a higher class, who possess a stronger sense than understanding of national dignity and honour, has been the independence of their country. This is represented as so inseparably connected with the parliament they now enjoy, that when the mode of their legislation shall be changed, and they shall cease to have this parliament exclusively their own, they imagine the nation must cease to be independent, and that they will become a debased and degraded people. Sir, when such a change as is proposed is considered as a degradation and debasement, it certainly must arise from some confusion in the ideas annexed to those words. If Ireland and its parliament shall be incorporated with the British nation and parliament, they will undoubtedly lose their distinctness, and identity. They will no longer have a separate political existence; they will become, but so will Great Britain and her parliament, parts only of the united whole; and in as far as a part cannot be said to be independent of the other parts, Ireland will, in that sense, become dependent on Great Britain, but so will Great Britain on Ireland. If after this it shall be contended that the lesser part is more dependent than the greater the argument will be found to resolve itself into what we have already discussed, namely the effects of the disproportion of numbers between the Irish and British members of the common parliament.

May I, however, be permitted to ask whether the Irish parliament, even since the boasted revolution or constitution of 1782, is, or ever can, in its separate, yet connected state, be totally independent? I know, Sir, that this may be reckoned delicate ground, but it has been resorted to by the enemies of a union, and I but follow them in entering upon it: and besides, I feel too strongly the ties of duty and affection by which I hold myself to be connected with that country as well as this, to avoid any part of the argument, which has been rendered necessary to a sound decision, merely because if ill understood, what I may say upon it may prove unpopular in the neighbouring kingdom. In such circumstances "maluerim veris offendere quam placere adulando." Is, then, a parliament independent, whose proceedings cannot receive the force of law without the act of persons not members of that parliament in any of its branches, and who, in acting or refusing to act in that respect, are themselves responsible to another parliament? Yet that this is the very condition and state of the Irish parliament is clear from the statute book of Ireland; and, indeed, its being so, is fondly considered by some of the most able opposers of a union, as essential to the happy connexion of that country with this. "The statute [Irish St. 20. & 22. Geo. 3rd, c. 47.] enacts, that no bill shall pass into a law in Ireland, unless it be returned under the great seal of Great Britain; thus not leaving the connexion of the two kingdoms a bare junction under one sovereign, but securing the continuance of that connexion, by making the British minister answerable to the British nation. —if any law should receive the royal assent in Ireland which could in any way injure the empire, be incompatible with its imperial interests, or tend to separate Ireland from it." [Mr. Foster's speech, p. 24].

To analyse this matter more in detail. The great seal of Great Britain cannot be put to an Irish bill but by the chancellor or lord keeper of that seal, who will seldom execute this duty of his office without the concurrence of those other ministers of state, members of the British council, who constitute what is called the cabinet. Every act so done, though under the command of the king, is an executive, not a legislative act, which the minister advises and performs at his peril, liable to be called to account for it by impeachment in this parliament. His majesty's personal expression of his assent to an Irish statute is perhaps as purely legislative as that by which he assents to a British law; but every public act done by a subject, except his speaking and voting in parliament, is in its nature executive, and that for which he is responsible. In the sentence I just now repeated, there seems to be implied some suggestion that the responsibility of the British ministers is confined to the case of Irish statutes affecting the empire at large, or tending to a separation of the two kingdoms. The Irish act referred to, says no such thing. It is indeed very common to hear a distinction made between acts of the Irish

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parliament, concerning the local policy and interests of that kingdom, and those whose objects are imperial. In a popular sense, and in extreme cases such a distinction no doubt exists. A road or estate bill in Ireland can hardly, by any possibility, concern the empire at large; and it might be folly in a British chancellor or cabinet to exercise any judgment, or apprehend any responsibility, in regard to it. But the law draws no line, and in every Irish statute of any considerable moment, the empire must be more or less concerned. Who is to judge of the degree in which it is so, or of the propriety and safety of advising his majesty to receive or reject any such statute? who but the minister or ministers who may be questioned for giving that advice and carrying it into effect. Does not this prove that there still remains a real and substantial subordination or dependence of the Irish on the British parliament; a dependence or subordination inherent in the very nature of the present mode of connexion between the two countries.—With regard to the executive government, its subordination is still more obvious. The king's solemn commands, to be executed in Ireland, are either communicated to the lord lieutenant when he enters upon his office, by his commission and general instructions under the seals of Great Britain, or by king's letters, transmitted from time to time, and countersigned by one of the secretaries of state, or, in revenue matters, by the lord treasurer, or three of the lords of the Treasury.

What is the consequence of all this? Ireland is still jealous of her independency. We are told by many, that she conquered that independency, and will maintain it by the sword; she therefore revolts at the practical exercise of powers constitutionally vested in the parliament and ministers of this country. The government here, partly from the fear of renewing former or exciting new animosities, partly from other causes, are supposed in general cases to leave matters to the Irish parliament, and the ministers of that country. From time to time, however, points will occur where there may appear cogent reasons for their exercising their own discretion, and this perhaps in a manner contrary to the sentiments prevailing with the servants of the crown in Ireland. In such cases the difficulty may often be surmounted by the prudence of confidential intercourse, and the adoption of some middle way, suggested by good temper and good sense, so as not to alarm the dignity of Ireland, or commit the imperial authority resident here. But more than once, even since I have had my attention directed to Irish affairs, situations have arisen in which the English ministry have thought it their duty to exercise, without such a temperature, an immediate controlling authority in Ireland. Now, Sir, whenever this has happened, they have incurred more than the hazard of rousing the jealousy, and affronting the high spirit of some of those persons in that kingdom who had been accustomed to a leading share in the measures of her government, and may think they are conscious to themselves of a superior knowledge of her affairs. Here, then, is a dilemma which has already occasioned many difficulties, and which, unless some remedy can be applied, will, I fear, be the source of growing embarrassment to both governments, and much ill blood between the two countries; nor can I see the possibility of any alteration which can have the effect of a remedy whilst the present system remains. His majesty, in order to exercise his legislative and executive functions, must either go to Ireland; or he must exercise them through the medium of servants, responsible and impeachable here; or Ireland, by its representatives, must come to England. The first of these plans would only remove the difficulty as to Ireland by throwing it upon Great Britain; and besides, the residence of the king of the British dominions any where but in Great Britain will hardly be proposed. The second we have shown to be incompatible with the real independency of Irish legislative and executive government. The third, therefore, only remains; i. e. such a legislative union and incorporation, as that the Irish nation shall be represented in this country by an adequate number of lords and commoners, returned to serve at Westminster in a common or united parliament. Then, indeed, it will be no longer true of Ireland, that she "must tamely follow Great Britain with submission and subserviency;" then she will be no longer "gens quæ juxta, jacet, dubiæ libertatis;" the country and its legislation will then, by their identification with this, be truly independent. They never can be so otherwise, unless Ireland will separate herself from Great Britain, and can trust to her own strength and means in re-

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sisting, or to the liberality of our enemies in not attempting to impose upon her the yoke of a government really foreign.

Having said so much on the topics of general policy, in respect to legislation and executive government, I will now examine this question of union, as it may affect the interests of Ireland in her trade, manufactures, and agriculture; interests which, when rightly understood, mutually assist each other, and which may be considered together, being liable in most instances to be improved or injured by the same causes. The advocates against a union have used much subtilty, though, in general, little method or order, in arguing this part of the subject. They seem to contend, that Ireland is now in a most flourishing situation, and in a state of progressive improvement; that she owes this, in the first place, to a compact under which her linen trade has been cultivated with the most happy success; and in the next, to that more solemn compact with Great Britain, "the glorious constitution of 1782," which enabled her to legislate for herself, and secure, protect, and cherish by her own vigilant attention to the great objects of her prosperity, that trade, and all the other branches of her commerce, her manufactures, and her agriculture. These compacts they treat as binding and complete. They cannot be departed from, and nothing farther is wanting to the growing prosperity and safety of Ireland. But a union would annul them, would shake or destroy every security which they have established, and would substitute in their place, the capricious, selfish, and despotic will of an unjust, narrow-minded, and rapacious rival. These, perhaps, are not the words, but I think they express, and do not exaggerate the meaning of what has been frequently and very recently insisted upon.

Let us, therefore, a little inquire, how these different allegations stand in point of fact. And first, as to the supposed compact concerning the linen trade. It is admitted that Great Britain is the great customer of Ireland for that her staple commodity: that we receive it for our home consumption free of all duty; and encourage its re-exportation from hence to foreign parts by the same bounties which we bestow on our own manufacture. This, I say, is admitted; but, it is stated, "That this encouragement to the Irish linen trade is the effect of a special contract, by which, for a valuable consideration, England became bound to grant and maintain it. The valuable consideration was, the relinquishment by Ireland of her woollen export trade, in which she had or might have become a dangerous rival. England had grown jealous of this rivality; her manufactures and her parliament had urged king William to check it; he had consented, and had expressed that consent in terms justly offensive to Ireland; a negotiation ensued, and acts of each of the two parliaments passed, by which Ireland engaged to withdraw from all competition as to woollen goods, on the condition that England would give that preference and assistance which she does to the linen manufactory of Ireland; in consequence of this treaty, the woollen fabrics, of which she at that time exported to the amount of 110,000*l.* a year, were abandoned; they cannot be resumed; and therefore Great Britain cannot recall or cancel that obligation by which she engaged herself to promote, in the manner alleged, the linen trade of that country." Such is in substance the statement made.

It is extraordinary, but true, that since these debates began, many persons, not ill informed in matters of this sort, have avowed their ignorance, and unsucessful endeavours to obtain the knowledge of the documents and acts in which this supposed compact is contained, of its date, particular clauses and provisions, and of the sanctions, whether of a statutable or diplomatic nature, by which it was guarded. But what I have to add, is still more extraordinary, and equally true, namely, that, such as it was, it no longer exists, but was totally and entirely repealed and made void, many years ago, at the instance of Ireland herself; and that the advantages which Great Britain still confers on the linen trade of Ireland, are, on her part, at the present hour, merely gratuitous, whatever may be the motives of generosity, policy, or self-interest, which induce her to continue them. For my own part, I know of no satisfactory evidence of agreements or compacts between nations, except what are to be found in their diplomatic or legislative records. I have accordingly endeavoured to trace the history of the business I am now discussing, in those sure, and only sure, repositories of the national transactions of both countries with each other—their respective statute

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books—and the correct result appears to me to be as follows:—Restrictive taxes had been laid so far back as the period of the Edwards, on the importation of woollen goods into this kingdom, whether from Ireland, or any other country beyond seas. But not to go back to any earlier period than the Restoration, by the act of 12 Car. 2, chap. 4, s. 1, 8*s.* 6*d.* per yard were imposed on all woollen cloths, and 1*s.* 3*d.* on woollen stuffs imported into England. These last mentioned duties have never been repealed. They have, indeed, been increased to 1*l.* 17*s.* 5*d.* per yard on cloth, and 5*s.* 6*d.* on stuffs, by the operation of new and general subsidies, affecting them in common with all other articles of importation. But the duty of 8*s.* 6*d.* per yard alone amounted, and would of itself still amount, to an entire prohibition. Thus stood the law at the period when the supposed bargain took place. The House will see that England did not then want the concurrence of Ireland, nor had any occasion to purchase that concurrence by any concession on her part, in order to exclude Irish woollens from her own home market. But, it seems, the English legislature and government of that time thought it good policy to listen to the representations made by the English manufacturers, of the danger their staple trade was exposed to from the competition of the Irish in foreign countries. The Irish parliament, on the other hand, seem to have been satisfied, that it was upon the whole for the interest of their country, to obtain the favour and protection of England to her linen manufactures, which had been even then carried to a considerable height, by an amicable understanding, and the relinquishment of that hostile competition in the woollen business abroad, which had occasioned so much ill-humour on this side of the water. Accordingly, they passed a law, in the 10th of W. 3rd, imposing an *ad valorem* duty of 4*s.* in the pound on all broad cloth, and 2*s.* on serges, baize, &c. exported from Ireland to any part of the world. This amounted, in effect, to a prohibition; but no act was passed in England on the occasion, to check or prohibit the exportation of English linens. Will it be said, Ireland had reason to expect such a law to pass? Where is the evidence of this? The English House of Lords, in an address to the throne, had, indeed, pressed the king to declare, "that if the woollen trade were relinquished in Ireland, and the subjects there should turn their industry and skill to the settling and improving the linen manufacture, for which generally the lands of that kingdom were very proper, they should receive all favour, countenance, and protection, from his royal influence, for the encouragement and promoting of the said linen manufacture to all the advantage and profit that kingdom could be capable of (9th June 1698)." The English Commons, in like manner, had implored the king to "make it his royal care to discourage the woollen, and encourage the linen manufactures in Ireland, to which they said they should always be ready to give their utmost assistance (30th June 1698)." And, the king, in answer, had said, "I will do all that in me lies to discourage the woollen manufacture in Ireland, and encourage the linen manufacture there (2nd July 1698)."

It was after this that the Irish act I have just mentioned passed. The English laws at that time, as to Irish linen, stood thus: by the 7th and 8th W. 3, c. 39, Irish linen was made importable into England duty free; but a new subsidy of 5 per cent on all goods imported, having been granted in the year after to continue till the 1st Feb. 1699, without any exception as to Irish linen, that article became liable to this new duty: and from the state of the war in 1698, it was probable that this subsidy would be renewed, as it accordingly was from time to time, and continued for the life of queen Anne; it may therefore be conjectured that the great wish of Ireland, as to her linen trade, then was, a restoration to the exemption granted by the first-mentioned act, so as again to open a free market for her linens in England. This was not obtained during the remainder of William's reign; but by 1st Anne, stat. 2, c. 8, the importation of Irish linen into this country, duty free, was restored, and that has continued to be the law ever since. Is it not therefore probable that Ireland was satisfied with this freedom of importing her linen goods, exempt from duty, into Great Britain? At least the case certainly stands so on the face of the acts of parliament. The Irish act which was only temporary, expired in 1702, and was not renewed; but a very strong, and certainly harsh act, and not temporary, was passed in England (10th and 11th Will. 3, c. 10,), totally prohibiting the exportation of Irish woollens to any fo-

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reign country. The power of the English parliament to make such a law was at that time strenuously insisted upon in this country, and, if not acknowledged, at least acquiesced under in Ireland; so that this last-mentioned statute did in effect prevent the export to all foreign parts of Irish woollen cloths. While this continued to be the case, it might have been unjust, and a breach of faith in England or Great Britain to impose any duty which might have cramped or injured the exportation of Irish linens, either to this or to foreign countries; but that has been so far from being done, even to this day, that, on the contrary, besides the continuation of the free import, various British acts have given the same bounties to Irish as to British linens exported from hence; and by the imposition of a heavy tax on foreign linens brought into Great Britain, she gives in that respect also an equal premium to the Irish as to her own manufacture.

But does the condition on the part of Ireland still continue? Is her part of the supposed compact still in force? and did she, when Great Britain renounced the claim to bind her by her statutes, renew, by any law of her own, the prohibition of the exportation of her woollens? Quite the contrary. Before the boasted æra of her independency, in 1779 and 1780, she had wisely, boldly, and successfully addressed to the British government and parliament her complaint, that this restriction was injurious to the industry and prosperity of her people; and by the British act of 20th Geo. 3rd, c. 6, the statute of Wm. 3rd was repealed, and a free exportation of her woollens allowed from Ireland to all foreign places. It is the natural, obvious, and just observation of a writer on this subject, that "This law, of course, put an end to the compact between England and Ireland, respecting the woollen and linen manufactures." This country has, indeed, still continued her encouragement to the Irish linen trade, the free entry into Great Britain, and the bounties on exportation from thence; but she has done so without any tie, contract, or other obligation, but what the general principles of good policy may impose. One is therefore a good deal surprised to read, in Mr. Foster's Address to the Freeholders of the County of Lowth, the following words:—"If the linen manufacture rests at all on any compact, that compact was made with the Irish parliament; the extinction of which takes away a security we have found adequate, and leaves it without the protection of its natural guardians."* According to the same address we are to believe, it seems, that as the compact in 1698 was and is the security for the linen trade of Ireland with Great Britain, so the more solemn and important compact of 1782, not only supplied a new guarantee to that security, by confirming to the former the birthright of a sole and independent parliament, but also, by the same means, roused a new spirit of exertion in the traders and manufacturers in general of that kingdom, while a legislative union would at once destroy the independence of the parliament, because it would be no longer solely Irish, extinguish the spirit which had been awakened, and remove every safeguard of permanence to whatever advantages it might hold out as a temptation to those weak and deluded persons who might ignorantly form any opinion in its favour.

Much has been said and written on the subject of that transaction of 1782. It appears to me chiefly of importance now, in as far as it may afford evidence of what the opinions were which eminent statesmen on both sides of the water then entertained, many of whom must be still anxious to have those opinions rightly understood. But, if their present sentiments correspond with what they formerly thought, this uniformity will be a strong argument in favour of those sentiments, and in that point of view, it becomes certainly a matter of public concern also, to ascertain what they were. Whatever they were, however, they are not binding upon them; much less upon us, or upon either the Irish or British parliament. Nay, no act of either parliament at that time would be binding on those of the present day; and, therefore, had each legislature separately declared that they meant the arrangement, then made, to be such a final adjustment of all relations between the two countries, as that no nearer connexion, no legislative union in a word, should ever be formed between them, that declaration would not be obligatory now, nor stand in the way of the two present legislatures concluding such a union. But I think I can prove, that nothing which appears on the records, or usual reports of the pro-

* Continuation of Anderson's History of Commerce, v. 4, p. 287.

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ceedings in parliament, or on the face of the thing, shows that either party meant, on that occasion, to shut out in future all question of union, but quite otherwise; that the progressive improvement in the trade, manufactures, and general prosperity of Ireland since, has not been owing to that transaction; that this prosperity is not secured by it; that it depends, in a very principal degree, on the policy and wisdom of Great Britain; and that the only certain safeguard of its permanence would be found in that very measure, which it is pretended would have the contrary effect.

There were four grievances then stated on the part of Ireland: one and the principal of which was the claim of the British parliament to a legislative power over that kingdom. The messages from the throne to both parliaments (9th and 16th April, 1782) mentioned "the king's concern to find that discontents and jealousies were prevailing on matters of great weight and importance; and recommended that the same should be taken into consideration, in order to such a final adjustment as might give mutual satisfaction to both kingdoms." The addresses of the Irish House specified the four grievances, "as the principal causes of the present discontent and jealousy" of that country. The only one of the four which a British act could redress, was the claim of legislation. On the 17th May, a resolution was come to in this House, that the act asserting that claim should be repealed, and immediately afterwards another, declaring it to be "indispensable to the interests of both kingdoms, that the connexion between them should be established by mutual consent on a solid and permanent basis." This last resolution, and the address by which it was communicated to his majesty, have given rise to a great deal of ingenious cavil and chicane. The right hon. gentleman who moved the present resolutions, in mentioning that address of 1782, had expressed what he had endeavoured to prove to be its true import and meaning, viz. "that his majesty would take farther measures to strengthen the connexion between the two countries;" on which it has been remarked, with a hypercritical nicety, that the word "farther," is not in the address. Neither, I believe, is the word "strengthen." But the point is, whether the meaning was not, that measures ulterior to those then proposed were in the contemplation of the House when it came to the resolution, and voted the address. I say they clearly were. What is the argument triumphantly pressed to show the contrary? Why, that the resolution and address were voted before the bill for repealing the Declaratory act of George 1st, and renouncing the claim to bind Ireland, was presented. [Mr. Foster's Speech, p. 19.] Surely, Sir, this is a strange fallacy.

The minister of the day, when he moved the two resolutions, is stated to have introduced them by a speech, mentioning the four grievances of Ireland, the claim of legislation, Poyning's act, the Mutiny bill, and the appellate jurisdiction. The first, he said, was to be redressed here, the others by acts to which the lord lieutenant was to be instructed to give the royal assent in Ireland; and after having explained this clearly and forcibly, he proceeded to express himself to the following effect:—"That Ireland could have no reason to complain; the terms acceded to by England were proposed by herself; the manner of redress had been prescribed by herself, and all her wishes would now be gratified in the way which she herself liked best; but as it was possible, that if nothing more was to be done, than what he had stated to be his intention, Ireland might, perhaps, think of fresh grievances, and rise yearly in her demands, it was fit and proper that something should be now done towards establishing, on a firm and solid basis, the future connexion of the two kingdoms. But that was not to be proposed by him here in parliament; it would be the duty of the Crown to look to that; the business might be first begun by his majesty's servants in Ireland; and if afterwards it should be necessary to enter into a treaty, commissioners might be sent from the British parliament, or from the Crown, to enter upon it, and bring the negotiation to a happy issue, by giving mutual satisfaction to both countries, and establishing a treaty which should be sanctioned by the most solemn forms of the constitutions of both."* After reading this, can it be seriously argued that no ulterior, no farther measures, were then in his contemplation and in that of the ministry, whose organ he was, and of which he formed so eminent a part?

This difficulty seems, indeed, to have been a little felt, and therefore another method is attempted of reconciling to

* See Mr. Fox's Speech, Vol. xxiii. p. 26.

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what really then passed, the idea that all political or constitutional arrangements were meant by the parties to this business of 1782 to be finally closed, so as that this country could never, with good faith, agitate in future, or propose to Ireland for her consideration and voluntary adoption or rejection, any thing of that sort. "The fact," we are told, "seems to be, that the resolution, in respect to future measures, had commerce only in view." [Mr. Foster's speech, p. 21.] But, Sir, what does the same minister say on that point? He is stated to have declared in this House, in 1785, "That, no idea of a commercial regulation had been entertained by the administration of 1782, in proposing the resolution in question."* After the duke of Portland communicated the two resolutions of 1782 to the Irish House of Commons, [27th May], and informed them also of the king's disposition to give his assent to bills to be passed there for redressing the other grievances, they assure his majesty, in a new address, "That, gratified in those particulars no constitutional question between the two nations will any longer exist, which can interrupt their harmony." In the answer to this, the king told them "that this declaration was very pleasing to him." At the close of the session, the Commons say to the lord lieutenant, "We shall have seen this great national arrangement (the sole and exclusive right of legislation in that parliament) established on a basis which secures the tranquillity of Ireland, and unites the affections as well as interests of both kingdoms." Lastly, his grace, in his speech on the prorogation, says, "Convince the people in your several districts, as you yourselves are convinced, that every cause of past jealousies and discontents is finally removed; that both countries have pledged their good faith to each other; and that their best security will be, an inviolable adherence to that compact: convince them that the two kingdoms are now one, indissolubly connected in unity of constitution and unity of interests."

Now, I must confess I cannot see any thing in all this but the expression of, first, an opinion that the past causes of discontent and jealousy were then finally removed; and what has happened to prove that they were not? Has the parliament of Great Britain renewed her claim to bind Ireland? Has there not been an annual mutiny act in Ireland ever since? Has Poyning's law; has the appellate jurisdiction of this country been restored? Secondly, a hope, somewhat too sanguine perhaps, that no question on constitutional points would any longer exist between the two nations. This hope the Irish house of commons expressed in the form of an assertion, which it would seem his majesty was no farther advised to adopt than by declaring the pleasure it gave him to find they entertained that belief. But does it follow from thence, that either parliament meant to preclude themselves from treating together on any measures which the king might recommend, or they think beneficial to both countries? By the phrase "constitutional questions which might interrupt their harmony:" was clearly meant disputes and claims on the one part or the other: not proposals from the one to the other, or from the sovereign to both, which either might approve or reject as they saw fit. Such is the present proposal, which I therefore think they never meant to bind themselves not to entertain; which they could not exclude us, their successors in both kingdoms, from entertaining; which in my conscience I believe many of the wisest and best men in both then hoped might, some time or other, be brought forward with success; which the second resolution I have mentioned, as come to by this House, and received with satisfaction in Ireland, seems in some degree to suggest; and which, when I recollect the reports I have read and heard of the minister's speech who moved those resolutions, I can never cease thinking his mind was full of on the occasion, till I shall learn that he himself has declared the contrary. Is it to be taken for granted, that the improvement beyond example which the trade, manufactures, and wealth of the people of Ireland are said to have experienced during the last sixteen or seventeen years, must be ascribed to the renunciation by this country of the claim to legislate for them? It seems very difficult to see how a mere negative act of that sort could possibly have such an effect. Had the British legislature, by its usurped authority over that country, for many years previous to that time, interfered with the internal or external commerce of Ireland? Had the Irish parliament been restrained from regulating and encouraging that commerce (the export woollen trade excepted) in the way they

* See Mr. Fox's Speech, vol. 25. p. 966.

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might think most likely to promote its increase? Or did the abolition of the appeal to the British House of Lords produce a new influx of British capital into Ireland? The great points gained by Ireland from this country as to commerce have, I believe, hitherto been considered to have been the fruit of those several acts of the British parliament in 1779 and 1780 (19 Geo. 3, c. 35 and 37, and 20 Geo. 3, c. 6, 10 and 18) of which one has been already observed upon, and which first opened to her a general freedom of trade, not only with the rest of the world, but with our American and West India colonies, the best mart for her commodities as well as ours. And if the advantages then obtained have been farther improved by the permission to trade with those colonies in every respect on the same footing as Great Britain does, which was granted in 1793 (33 Geo. 3, c. 63); was the British act of that year, giving such permission, a consequence of what has been called the emancipation of Ireland?

But, Sir, I think some here must know, and many may recollect to have heard, that Ireland was growing fast in industry, enterprise, manufactures, trade and agriculture, long before either the acknowledgment of her independence, or the grant of what was called a free trade. Indeed, I believe it will be found, whatever may have been the cause, that all the three kingdoms, and his majesty's dominions in general, have flourished with an accelerated degree of rapidity in all the branches of national exertion, productive of trade and wealth, for a period of about fifty years to be dated from the time of the general pacification of Europe by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. With regard to Ireland, besides general memory, I might appeal to the weighty testimony recorded by Mr. Arthur Young, of the late lord chief baron Foster, in whose family an enlightened attention to political economy and the sources of national prosperity seems to be hereditary. In Mr. Young's account of a visit he paid to that learned person during his tour through Ireland in 1776, he says he gave him a variety of information relative to the state of that country uncommonly valuable, and among other things mentions his having told him, "that Ireland was more improved in the last twenty years than in a century before; that the great spirit began in 1749 and 1750; that thirty years before the export of linen and yarn was only about 500,000*l.*: but that it was then from 1,200,000*l.* to 1,500,000*l*;" * that is, it had been nearly trebled in that time. By the same proportion and progress, if only the same causes which then existed, and had produced the great spirit mentioned by lord chief baron Foster, had continued to operate, this export would, in six or seven years hence, amount to four millions and a half. Now, Sir, with all the supposed assistance it has derived from the transaction of 1782, when a fair account is taken, it will not be found to have gone on increasing in that ratio. The annual rated value of Irish exports of every sort to all parts of the world, of which provisions made probably more than one third, is stated from the official accounts of that country, on an average of the three years ending on the 25th of March 1798, to have been in Irish money only 4,642,779*l.* I own, therefore, I think it much more reasonable that we should ascribe the growing improvement of Ireland in the chief article of her manufacture to the spirit which began in 1750, and appears to have continued in full force during the interval between that time and the date of Mr. Young's tour, than either to a new spirit said to have been roused by the arrangement of 1782, an arrangement which had no direct connexion with such objects, or even to the British act of 1780, which had.

The next question is, Whether the arrangement of 1782, though it may not have caused, does not secure the permanent continuance of a flourishing commerce to Ireland? After what has been said, this question seems to answer itself; yet we find that transaction alleged to be the foundation of such security, and which it is supposed a union would entirely take away. Did the acts of the 22 Geo. 3, c. 53, and 23 Geo. 3, c. 28, while they renounced all powers in this parliament to make laws to bind Ireland, impose any indissoluble restraint on Great Britain, as to the repeal of whatever British statutes might then exist, or might in future be enacted, of a nature beneficial to that country? We have seen in part the encouragement the Irish linen trade derives from mere British laws; and it might here be a proper time to take a more general and connected view of all the commercial advantages Ireland enjoys, both in that

* Young's Tour in Ireland, vol. i. p. 153.

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and other respects, solely under those laws, in order to show how vain, I had almost said how extravagant, the arguments have been, by which it has been attempted to be proved that the balance is even between that country and this, or rather preponderates on the side of Ireland. But such general statements have been made already more than once, both here and in the Irish parliament, and are now to be found in a variety of authentic publications. I will content myself, therefore, with trying to point out some of the fallacies belonging to the endeavours which have been used to show those statements to be erroneous. It is admitted, that the great market for Irish linen is this country. On the annual average of the four years preceding lady day 1798, of about 40 millions of yards exported, near 35 were sent to Great Britain and the British colonies and islands; or seven-eighths of the whole. This immense quantity was imported duty free, and a great part of what was re-exported received a bounty; while all foreign linens imported here were charged with a duty, variously computed, at from about 33 to about 25 per cent. Taking it at the lowest, is not this a bounty to the amount of no less than one-fourth of the value, on Irish linen goods brought into this kingdom? and is it not a difficult task for any body to undertake to contend, "that those linens would, to any considerable extent, find their way here even though there were no duty on the foreign?" [Mr. Foster's Speech, p. 89.] It is stated that Irish linens have risen of late not less than 35 per cent above their usual value. [Mr. Foster's Speech, p. 89.] Sir, I have endeavoured to inform myself of the causes of this extraordinary rise, and I believe it will be found to be owing partly to the reduced quantity manufactured on the continent, and at the same time an increased demand in consequence of the war, and partly to unwise and unprofitable speculations occasioned by that circumstance. It seems the demand for shirting for the different armies of Europe has been immense, and considerable quantities of Irish linens have also been lately sent, directly or circuitously, to Spain and Portugal, and likewise to some of our West India islands to be exported from thence to South America, as a substitute for those of German manufacture which used to be sent there, but which are now become too scarce to be sufficient for the supply of that market. In confirmation of this, it appears, that during the two years preceding the present, the import of linen from Ireland into this country diminished considerably, while the re-exportation increased. In 1797, the Irish linen imported amounted to 39,868,000 yards, and the re-exportation was but 3,889,830; last year the importation was only 35,338,000 yards, and the re-exportation 6,590,456.

But let us take it the other way, and suppose the 25 per cent duty to be extended to the Irish linen. Will it be said, that such a burden on the trade to this country in that article, would not put a stop to it? Will it be so said, by those who have very justly remarked, that the smaller charge of 20 per cent on its general export, entirely "put down the woollen trade of Ireland?" [Mr. Foster's speech, p. 83]. If it would not put a stop to it, Ireland is certainly obliged to Great Britain for her generosity, or rather profusion, in remitting to her an annual duty it seems she could afford to pay, of from half a million to a million sterling. In an account produced to the House of Lords by that very able and accurate officer the inspector-general, the true value of all the products and manufactures of Ireland imported into this country, on the average of the three years preceding the 5th of Jan. last, is stated at about five millions and a half, while that of the exports of the same sort, from hence to Ireland, amounted to little above two; the excess being near three millions and a half. On the gross view, therefore, of this sort of debtor and creditor account, Ireland appears to be a gainer to that amount, in consequence of the present commercial code, not of that, but of this country. The true value of the total imports from Ireland into this country, was, on the like average, 5,612,689*l.*; that of the exports from hence thither, 3,555,845*l.*; leaving an apparent balance of 2,056,844*l.* in favour of Ireland.

But we are told [Mr. Foster's Speech, p. 80], that upon a proper examination of the articles which compose the gross sums in these accounts, the real balance will be found to be much in favour of Great Britain. To make this out, the objects of the mutual trade of the two kingdoms are classed under the three heads of, 1, manufactures; 2, raw materials, &c.; and, 3, foreign articles. The particulars are then arranged in such a manner as to

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make it appear, 1st, that Ireland takes from Great Britain to the amount of 14,000*l.* a year more, under the first head, than Great Britain does from her; 2nd, that she supplies Britain with an excess of raw materials, including articles of prime necessity, to the amount of no less than 2,463,447*l.*; and, 3rd, that the excess of the foreign articles exported from this country into Ireland, over the similar imports from thence into this country, is 1,366,309*l.* This is a very different method of stating the case from what has been usual. I have endeavoured to ascertain whether the right clue might not be found to this seeming refutation of the hitherto received opinion, that the profitable balance is very greatly in favour of Ireland. I think it may, and I will attempt to explain myself in regard to it, in the best manner I can. 1. To the amount of British manufactures taken off by Ireland, which, by Mr. Irving's tables, is but 1,640,195*l.* have been added all the articles brought either from our American colonies, or the East Indies, the value of which is not less than 970,000*l.* "Much of this," we are told, "is real manufacture, and that the rest may be deemed so, on account of the employ of labour in the colony, and of the shipping." [Mr. Foster's speech, p. 80]. But surely it can never be intended seriously to maintain, that Great Britain profits as much by the industry, skill, and labour employed by the people of the East and West Indies in manufacturing for the use of these kingdoms their own raw materials, as Ireland does by those of her inhabitants engaged in her domestic fabrics. Indeed, as to the British West Indian and American colonies, it seems to me, that since a full participation in the trade with them has been opened to Ireland, the opulence acquired by manufactures or otherwise in those parts of the British dominions, in as far as it is not to be considered as merely local, merely West Indian or American, is to be reckoned not British more than Irish, but imperial; and this is also true as to the East Indies, supposing the Irish act of 1793 (33 Geo. 3, c. 31) to have secured to Ireland as great a share of commercial intercourse with that country as she had in any way the means of carrying on; a supposition more than warranted by the little, or rather, I believe, no use she has made of the privileges since she obtained it.—With regard to the shipping, undoubtedly Great Britain is a gainer by carrying the East and West India articles required for the consumption of Ireland. But could Ireland, all circumstances considered, obtain those articles so beneficially in any other way? Her own tonnage is not equal to the carriage of her own produce and manufactures to this country; and in the present state of things, even the rest of Europe is almost entirely supplied by Great Britain, notwithstanding the protection the naval commerce of several other states derives from their neutrality. When to these considerations we add the immense variety of channels of a more advantageous nature, in a mercantile view, in which it is well known that the British capital vested in this branch of her carrying trade might be employed, we shall not easily be persuaded to place whatever gain arises from it to the credit side of Ireland, in settling accounts between that country and this.

2. Under the general head of raw materials, &c. exported from Ireland, have been included, by the description of articles of prime necessity, beef, butter, pork, corn, and other provisions; Irish linen yarn is also classed under this head; while cheese, fish, such as cod and herrings, &c. and raw silk and cotton yarn, are articles classed as manufactures among the British exports. But in comparisons of this sort, the expression of "raw materials" has been generally used to signify matters which constitute the basis of a manufacture, and contribute thereby much more to the wealth of the country to which they are carried, and where they are worked up, than in their rude state they had done to that of the country supplying them. In this sense, beef, corn, &c. cannot with any propriety be ranked under that description; they add nothing to the wealth of the country importing them; they continue just worth the price at first paid for them, and in the case under our consideration, if not obtained from Ireland, the same capital would probably procure them elsewhere, or might be directed to the production of them at home.

3. Although the sum of 970,000*l.* by the title of colonial goods, had been added under the first of these three heads to the amount of British manufactures exported to Ireland, it is here retained to make up the gross sum of 1,468,179*l.* as the value of foreign articles taken by Ireland from Great Britain, and is thus twice charged against this country: this has clearly hap-

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pened] by mistake, though it makes a most material difference indeed in the result. But it is said, "the excess of gain to Great Britain must appear prodigious, if we consider that of all that gross sum of near a million and a half, only 407,000*l.* is East India trade; and that what remains, to the value of above a million, is open to be imported direct to Ireland, were she obliged or *inclined* to import it so. [Mr. Foster's Speech, p. 81.] Undoubtedly it is open to her; but if she could do it to advantage, will any man who knows the nature of trade suppose that she would not have the inclination, but would suffer Great Britain to gain from her what she does by thus acting as her carrier? The truth is, she wants shipping and capital, what she has, being necessarily occupied to better advantage, or for more necessary purposes; and such being the case, can we in fairness be required to set this down as a benefit which Great Britain holds at the good will of her sister kingdom?

Thus, sir, I think we must still retain the belief hitherto so prevalent with the generality of those in both countries, who have most deeply considered such matters, that in their commercial intercourse the balance between them is greatly in favour of Ireland, and it follows, of course, that Ireland, in the present relative situation of the two kingdoms, must depend entirely on the policy and wisdom of the British parliament for the continuance of whatever part of her general prosperity she derives from that source. This indeed is sometimes admitted: it is admitted that Great Britain, by what is called a war of duties and prohibitions, might injure Ireland for a time; of this America, it is said, affords ample proof; but that Britain herself must suffer in such a contest, and that her wisdom, her liberality, and her own interest will forbid her entering into such hostilities. I entirely agree in the position that it is not only liberal, but wise, and for her own advantage, that the present system should be persevered in by this country, though I regret that America should have been unnecessarily mentioned, and this at the very time, and as it were with the same breath with which the right hon. gentleman who has proposed an union was in my opinion most unjustly accused of holding out threats to induce Ireland to accede to it. Alas! Sir, have we, then, no instances where the wisest nations have departed from the line of sound policy, and by the operation of various causes, on the natural frailty of human counsels and conduct, adopted measures at once injurious to themselves and to their neighbours? or is wisdom of conduct to be the possession in perpetuity —the exclusive right—of all the successive administrations and parliaments which, in all times to come, are to hold the reins of government, and exercise the functions of legislation in Great Britain? Should the principles which now prevail on commercial subjects lose their influence; should disputes, prejudices, passion, and animosity, ever take their place in adjusting the relations of trade between the two islands; and to what binding laws, to what inviolable treaty can Ireland appeal? or what will then avail towards compelling the admission of her commodities into the British ports and markets, or the exportation of what she may want from thence, her own parliament, the supposed adequate guardian of her trade, its vigilance, its regulations, and its bounties? Will the independence and distinctness of that parliament be able to ward off the blow, which on such a supposition may be aimed at her prosperity, when she shall have shut her ears to that warning voice which now calls upon her to listen to the salutary measure by which alone she can be really and completely secured against the possibility of such an evil?

We are, it is true, too apt to think, when we think superficially, that our descendants will never relapse into errors similar to those of our forefathers, from which we have escaped; and that what appears right and wise to us, must be thought so by them. But does experience confirm this opinion? Those who have attended to the great and numerous fluctuations of system in our national policy, foreign and domestic, will, I believe, decide otherwise:

"We think our fathers fools, so wise we grow:
Our wiser sons, no doubt, will think us so—"

is the sensible, though perhaps not very poetical reflexion of a great and sagacious poet. Have we not heard the obsolete notion of making Ireland a British garrison, revived in this House, and from a most respectable quarter? On the present occasion it was indeed, I think, a single, and if the hon. gentleman will pardon the expression, a singular opinion; but a change of time and circumstances may perhaps render it less so. I dread to reflect on the possibility of its ever

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becoming reasonable; those, however, who will have to determine, may think it so, when the sentiments of none of us can have any share in the deliberation. What was the case of Scotland? every body must now admit that, being under the same king, who was also head of both parliaments, and with the rules of succession to the crown (till the Revolution) the same in both kingdoms, it would have been the interest of England to have encouraged the trade of Scotland, and conferred upon her every favour that could have tended to increase her prosperity. But how different was the conduct she actually held to her! Was the parliament of Scotland less independent than the Irish parliament has been since 1782, and does it not appear from history, that Scotland was to the full as desirous, had she had the means of establishing a national commerce, and rivalling in her proportion the trade and manufactures of the neighbouring kingdom, as Ireland can now possibly be to retain and augment those which she at present possesses? In 1785, those persons in Ireland who, in my opinion had the best knowledge of her interests, did not think the advantages she then enjoyed from her commercial connexion with Great Britain, were sufficiently safe under the shield of British acts and British policy; "they wished to have the security of a legislative compact" [Mr. Foster's Speech, p. 87], and this country was desirous to give them that security, in as binding and permanent a form as was compatible with the existence of distinct legislatures. The mistaken jealousy of speculative independence defeated the plan. It is now proposed to give them a legislative security of a much more binding nature, one as indissoluble as human wisdom can devise or imagine; but we are now told by some of the strongest advocates for the much more imperfect measure of that year, even in respect to commerce, that a compact by union to dissolve which, no legitimate authority would any longer exist in either country, would be a measure pregnant with danger and mischief to Irish trade and manufactures. With what success, the consistency of these sentiments has been contended for, I shall leave to others to determine; it is now, it seems thought safest solely to trust to "a connexion rivetted on the interests, the sentiments, and the affections of both nations, and those rivets closed and kept firm by the regulations of 1782 [Mr. Foster's Speech, p. 109].

Some admit that there are commercial benefits still left for Great Britain to bestow; that a perfectly free communication between the two islands, a complete interchange of commodities of all sorts, without the charge of any kind of duty in their transit from the one to the other, would greatly redound to the advantage of Ireland; that she would then send more manufactured goods to Great Britain than she yet does, and receive a greater quantity and variety of raw materials from thence. But then it is asked, why should not this country complete her system of liberality to the sister kingdom? That is in one moment called liberality, which in another is described as mere selfishness, or an unwilling ransom extorted by intimidation. Why should she not grant to Ireland, without the condition of a union, what by benefiting her must also benefit herself? Others, however, tell us, that if the British minister were to ask them what farther trade could be opened? what new manufactures promoted? their answer would be "You can give us nothing, and our only request on the part of Ireland is, that you will let us alone." [Mr. Foster's Speech, p. 77.] Both these grounds are taken by different persons in arguing against a union, and for the purpose of proving that Ireland either ought to obtain, or if she has already obtained, ought for ever to be permitted to possess every possible benefit of trade she can derive from this kingdom, without our proposing that she should agree to that measure; that is, agree to a settlement which, while it would afford the only permanent security for those benefits, would, in my opinion, at the same time confer others of a still more important nature than any commercial advantage whatever, both on that country and on this. With that opinion, I do not scruple to say, in regard to such commercial boons as may still be left in the power of Great Britain, that I would not be hasty to part with them, if there were any chance that a belief that they can only be acquired through a union, might work in its favour on the selfish tempers of those who overlook the many more weighty political reasons for its adoption.

As to the advantages which have already been granted, though it may be, and undoubtedly is, true, that, in

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contributing to the prosperity of Ireland, they also promote that of the whole empire, of which she forms so material a part; what if the machinations of foreign and domestic enemies,—the suggestions of ill-directed national vanity,—the exaggerated and mistaken principle of independence,—and the restless and proselytical spirit of democracy, should succeed in tearing asunder this mighty limb from the imperial body: would it, in such case, be still for the interest of Great Britain to continue the laws by which those advantages have been bestowed? Sir, I do not like to pursue this train of reflexion: but I am satisfied, that those causes are at this moment operating with such increasing energy, that if a union does not soon take place, a separation, unfortunate to Great Britain and ruinous to Ireland, certainly will.

I have already mentioned my persuasion, that the people of Ireland will in time, after a really final settlement of the connexion and relations between the two countries by an incorporating union, experience the advantages of a communication of English capital and credit. This position has been treated as "a foolish, absurd, futile, and unsupported assertion" [Mr. Foster's Speech, p. 68. 76]; but I think the assertion may be considered as approaching as nearly to a prediction of the truth as any thing can do, which mere human foresight may conjecture concerning future consequences and events. Is much argument necessary to convince us that monied men will be more ready than at present to lend their capital on landed security, or to pledge their credit by partnerships in trade and manufactures in that country, after it shall possess a steady uniformity of government, —the same legislature with themselves,— an established conformity of legal decisions to those whereby their property is regulated and secured at home,—internal peace and habitual industry?

But a detail is gone into to show that English money is not likely to be transported to Ireland and vested there, either in trade or manufactures. If I understand the general scope of that detail, it is this: 1st. A union will not carry over English capital to be employed in the manufactory in Ireland of any of the great articles of consumption with which we now supply that country, viz. woollens, cotton goods, iron, and pottery, because England has advantages for those fabrics not to be found in Ireland, and which will always render them so much cheaper in the former country, that the Irish consumer will rather import them from thence, than buy them as made at home. 2nd. Neither will a union induce the English capitalist to establish such manufactures in Ireland for exportation to foreign markets, because those foreign markets have been long as open to Ireland as they can be after a union, and yet no such establishments have taken place. 3rd. As it will not carry over English capital to establish, either for Irish consumption or foreign export, those manufactures in which Britain excels Ireland; neither will it attract it to that manufacture in which Ireland undersells Great Britain, namely, the linen; "for though that manufactory has been free and prosperous in Ireland for these ninety years, and has afforded many great fortunes to the industrious who have engaged in it, yet hardly any British capital has settled in it" [Mr. Foster's Speech, p. 75].

Permit me, Sir, to examine shortly how these different points are made out. "Iron and pottery," it is said, "depend so totally on plenty and cheapness of fuel, that they exist only in the coal countries, and have never been known, even in England, to make what can be called a settlement at any distance from a plentiful colliery. In the pottery too, the flint and clay which are so abundant in England, have not yet been found in any quantity in Ireland, and in fact there is not a single pottery in Ireland. It is self-evident, therefore, that these manufactures never can travel from the country which has coal, to that which has it not —from Britain to Ireland; and the same facility of fuel must give to Britain a decided preference in all manufactures where steam engines cheapen the price of labour. Woollens, though established for centuries in Yorkshire, have never travelled in any direction ten miles from the coal country, and they are manufactured there to such advantage over Ireland, that England supplies her to the value of near 600,000*l.* a year, though burdened with an important duty of more than 8 per cent. And as to cottons, machinery being more used in this manufactory than in the others, the Irish cannot, even on the eastern coast opposite the British collieries, make cotton twist within at least 20 per cent as cheap as Britain can supply them. In Britain, during the con-

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tinuance of Arkwright's patent, this fabric was subject to a heavy charge on that account; but though such exclusive privilege did not exist in Ireland, no English money was ever employed to fit up his machinery there." [Mr. Foster's Speech, p. 68.]

You will perceive how much stress is laid, in this enumeration of difficulties, on the circumstance of fuel. But let us not take it for granted, either that cheapness of fuel is so indispensable a requisite to cheapness of manufacture, even in the instances in question, as that it may not be compensated for by other circumstances; or that abundance of coal is a benefit which nature has so absolutely denied to Ireland as seems in this part of the argument to have been assumed.—Take the case of iron: I am informed that some of the articles made of that metal which require the greatest consumption of coals, for example anchors, are manufactured in this metropolis, where fuel is, I believe, dearer than in almost any other part of the kingdom. Labour is also dearer here than in most of the other sea-port towns, to which those anchors are to be sent. Yet other circumstances having occasioned the employment of the capital, and the cultivation of the skill necessary for that business in this place, it seems that it can be carried on, on the whole, to more advantage here than where both coals and labour are much cheaper. The importance of the cheapness of fuel to the manufacturing of other commodities made of iron, is much over-rated; it is certainly a very material circumstance in regard to coarser articles; but it will be found, by consulting the proper documents, that four-fifths of the goods made of iron, which are annually exported from Great Britain to Ireland and other parts of the world, consist of goods in the manufacture of which the price of coals has hardly any perceptible effect: the principal value of those goods is derived from the skill and labour of the artisan; but labour is also dearer in the places where they are made, chiefly Birmingham and Sheffield than in most parts of the world. The only advantage therefore Great Britain possesses as to such articles, arises from the superior skill, expertness, and celerity of the workman. But with the encouragement which a new state of things would hold out to the Irish manufactures, is it to be doubted that they will attain to an equality in those respects with the manufactures of this country?*

The statement as to the woollen goods made in Great Britain, would lead an inattentive person to suppose that this manufacture was almost entirely confined to Yorkshire. That county, or rather a circuit within that county, of not more than ten miles every way, is called its "old and great settlement." [Mr. Foster's Speech, p. 69.] But the fact is, that the trade there is confined chiefly to the coarser kind of cloths, while the principal seat of the manufactory of fine cloths, as well as of the light and fancy woollen goods, is in a part of England where coals are much dearer than in a great many parts of Ireland, namely at Bradford, Trowbridge and Chippenham.—The real case as to the Irish woollen trade is, that Ireland works up all the wool she produces, though she now only exports to the value of about 12,500*l.* yearly, instead of 110,207*l.* her export of that article a century ago, and she receives from this country to the annual amount of 580,723*l.* This is no longer owing to the restrictive condition of a compact long ago at an end; nor does it appear that the goods of this material which she does make, are dearer or necessarily so than those she imports from hence, the quality of each being considered;—we are told the true reason; it is, "that agriculture and the linen manufacture are found to give better profit in land than sheep afforded" [Mr. Foster's Speech, p. 72.]; a reason which, no doubt, as to that manufacture, will continue to operate, whatever may become of the present duties upon it, in its transit either from Ireland to this country, or from hence to Ireland.—In the cotton business I understand the consumption of coals is, comparatively speaking, very inconsider-

* I am informed that the city of Leige affords a striking example of the small relative importance of cheapness of fuel and labour, to the success of the most valuable manufactures in iron. That city had been for many ages noted for those manufactures; coals may be dug almost at the very gates of the town, and at a very trifling expense, as the veins are to be found within a few feet of the surface, and there is hardly any part of the continent where provisions are cheaper and more abundant; yet Birmingham and Sheffield now undersell Leige in those very manufactures for which she had been long so famous, with the exception of a very few articles, at the rate of not less than 15 to 25 per cent.

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able. Fuel is not more abundant now in England than it was 25 years ago; yet during that period the quantity of cotton wool manufactured in Great Britain has increased from three to near thirty millions of pounds. The importation of the raw material is alike open to Ireland: that country abounds in weavers; and I am told the workman who is in the practice of weaving linen, is capable, with little or no previous instruction or practice, of becoming an expert weaver of plain cottons. What, then, is the real cause of her paying to this country more than 100,000*l.* a year for cotton goods manufactured here? what but the want of that capital which alone excites the industry and attention, and thereby improves the skill of the workman, furnishes the means of dividing labour, which diminishes its cost beyond any difference—a difference in the amount which wages and expense of living can ever occasion, and enables the opulent trader to give long credit, support accidental losses, and thrive under a much smaller profit than is requisite to others less fortunate in that respect, who might attempt to become his rivals.

But, does Great Britain possess such advantages over Ireland in respect of fuel as has been supposed?—Many coal-mines exist, and are worked in Ireland [Mr. Foster's Speech, p. 88, and Mr. Beaufort's Memoir, p. 27]; and I believe in many parts of it the veins are rich and extensive. Mr. Evans, engineer to the Grand Canal, in his evidence laid before the Irish House of Commons in 1783, said, "That the Kilkenny collieries, if properly worked, were capable of producing 300,000 tons of culm yearly; that this might be carried by the canal, and sold at the distance of forty miles for 1*s.* 6*d.* per barrel of 4 cwt.; that there were collieries at Lough Allen, equal in quantity, if properly worked, to the supply of the whole kingdom, and in quality equal, if not superior, to the best Whitehaven coals." There are seams of coal at Drumglass and Dungannon [Young's Tour, vol. 2, p. 91,], said to be of such thickness and goodness as to be more than equal to six times the consumption of Dublin; and those collieries are within a few miles of a canal by which a water communication is already open to that city, and every other part of Ireland. What has been the real cause that those mines have not hitherto been turned to account? Not the want of encouragement from the Irish parliament: they have been always ready and liberal in furnishing public aid to works promising to prove of public benefit. But experience has long shown that public money, even to profusion, will not perform the functions of private capital, the utter deficiency of which appears to have occasioned the failure of every undertaking hitherto formed for completing the works necessary to furnish the metropolis and country of Ireland with this valuable commodity from her own mines.—After all, while coals brought coastwise from one part of England to another, exclusive of London, are subject to a duty of somewhat more than 5*s.* 9*d.* per chaldron, and if to London, of no less than 9*s.* 5*d.*; when exported to Ireland, they pay but 1*s.* 9*d.* in Great Britain; and, if for the use of the manufactories, no Irish duty; and an inexhaustible supply from Wales, Whitehaven, and the west of Scotland, is open to the whole extent of the eastern shores of Ireland.—In regard to the flint and clay used in the pottery wares, that England is far from possessing such great natural advantages over Ireland as has been supposed. The late Mr. Wedgwood, on his examination before this and the other House of parliament, when the Irish propositions were depending, stated, that some of the flints used in this manufacture are brought from the Irish shore, being picked up from the ballast of Irish vessels discharged at Liverpool; and that the finer clay is procured on the coast of England, and can be shipped at 6 or 7*s.* per ton; but that from the additional charge of the inland carriage, it costs when it reaches Staffordshire from 1*l.* 16*s.* to 2*l.* 2*s.* His conclusion was, that if the propositions had been adopted, Ireland might have undersold Great Britain in pottery goods 40 or 50 per cent.

To show that British capital will not, in consequence of a legislative union, be vested, or British credit pledged, either in the establishment of new Irish manufactures for foreign markets, or in the farther cultivation and extension of the existing linen trade of that country, the reasoning drawn from the experience of what has happened while there was no such union, proceeds on a direct *petitio principii*, on the assumption that such union will neither furnish invitations which cannot be expected, nor remove obstacles which cannot be done away, by any other means. Indeed, the great staple commodity of Ireland, her linen, is even now much more

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indebted to British credit than, from the statements I have referred to, would be supposed. It may be true that, in a strict sense, British capital has not "settled" (to any extent) in Ireland, that is, that persons from this kingdom have not removed with large capitals to reside in that country for the purpose of carrying on a traffic in Irish linens. But is it a correct inference from thence, that British money has had no influence in promoting the fabric of those linens? I have the very best reason to believe, that in general the linen manufacturers and merchants in Ireland, in order to be able to carry on their business, find it necessary to draw on the agent or factor here to whom their consignments are made, immediately after the goods are shipped, for about two-thirds of the amount of their value, although a very considerable part of those goods often remain on the hands of such consignee for six or nine months, and he is afterwards frequently obliged to continue still longer out of his money by the credit he is expected to give to the purchasers.

Sir, the security and advancement of trade and manufactures are unquestionably matters of great national concern; but I can never look upon them as the chief, much less as the exclusive objects of government. I am satisfied Ireland would gain by a union with Great Britain advantages much more important; general civilization; settled habits of morality and true religion, in the room of the blind superstition and fanatical rage, now too commonly to be found among the different sects in that country; a uniform submission to law; and that which is essential to the attainment of those great ends, the mitigation and gradual extinction of the spirit of disturbance, insurrection, devastation, plunder and massacre, which has prevailed among the Irish peasantry with more or less violence, but almost without intermission, as far back as we can trace their authentic history. I own I have been often astonished to find men of sense and information imputing this melancholy condition of society in Ireland, to this or the other measure, or system of this or the other ministry of the present reign; a reign, too, which has been distinguished by a continued series of acts of lenity and beneficence to that country. But I was particularly surprised, upon a late occasion, to hear all the miseries and discord we have lately witnessed, all the bloodshed which has deluged our sister kingdom, charged to the recall of a respectable and amiable nobleman from the lord lieutenancy in 1795. Is it, then, believed, that all would have been well if lord Fitzwilliam had been left to govern Ireland, on the principles which he had been advised, or was resolved to adopt? Is it thought that the disciples of Tone, whose political gospel was framed and promulgated years before the appointment of that chief governor, would have been satisfied with his intended grant of Catholic emancipation, and his intended refusal of parliamentary reform? Sir, we have demonstrative proof that the concession of both would not have satisfied them. That preacher of revolution, and his disciples, were to be satisfied with nothing that his majesty's government, or his parliament, could give; they were to be satisfied only by the establishment of a democratic republic with a Gallo-Hibernian Directory; while the imaginations of their mad and deluded followers were inflamed—not with considerations of religion or legislature—of this or that set of dogmas—or this or that form and right of election—but with a rage for the invasion of property; the abolition of tithes and even rent, on the true French plan, without compensation or equivalent; the extinction of all law, civil and criminal!—Others admit that the misfortunes of Ireland are not solely imputable to the recall of lord Camden's predecessor, or to what I believe they modestly and charitably denominate the weak and wicked policy of his majesty's present ministers. They are willing to allow that former administrations, for a long course of years, are entitled to their share in the blame. In truth, Sir, if the servants of the crown, at different periods, were answerable for those inveterate and ever-recurring disorders of that country which have prevailed during their respective administrations, not one could be exculpated of all those who have at any time had a share in the government of the empire, from the days of Burleigh, Bacon, and Walsingham, down to those of their present successors in the responsible departments of the state; neither lord Strafford, a name not free, perhaps, from just reproach, but illustrious also for talents and virtues, to which his descendant, the noble earl I have mentioned, must look back with satisfaction and pride; nor lord Clarendon, the dukes of Ormond, lord Somers, lord Cowper, sir Robert Walpole,

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Mr. Pelham, &c. &c. any more than those whom we ourselves have known at different times entrusted by his present majesty with the conduct of public affairs. But do gentlemen seriously believe that all the successive measures of so many great, enlightened, and liberal statesmen, have been inspired by blind ignorance, tyrannical oppression, or infatuated folly? Sir, I cannot agree in such a lampoon, both on the memory of so many great men whom I have learned to reverence and admire, and on the general principles and practice of the English government for more than two centuries. I believe every thing which wise and impartial policy could suggest has, at different times, been tried, and, alas! tried in vain, during that long period; though it cannot be denied that occasions have also intervened, where passion, prejudice, and short-sighted maxims of government have prevailed. But, on the whole, the unavoidable conclusion is this—to adopt the words of one of the learned barristers to whom I referred in an early part of what I have submitted to the House, as I have seen them reported—"There is some radical error in the system of Irish government, and this should be sought for and corrected, else the seeds of discontent will fructify for ever." The gentleman, indeed, seems to have meant a radical error, not in the frame and constitution, but in the administration of the Irish government. That opinion, I have, I think, clearly refuted. To what remaining source, then, are we to trace this fundamental defect, whose existence is so manifest? To what other can it be traced, but to the imperfections incident to a local and distinct parliament, in a country forming but part, and the least powerful part, of an extensive empire; to that parliament which, though often, and now I believe particularly, containing in it men of as much talents and integrity as can exist any where, has yet, after the experience of ages, been found inadequate to provide an effectual remedy for the hitherto incurable maladies of the country?

Permit me, Sir, here to advert to certain arguments I have lately met with, to prove that it cannot be expected that an incorporated legislature, assembled at Westminster, should be able to tranquillize Ireland, or gradually establish civilization and a peaceable submission to the authority of the laws among the lower order of its inhabitants. Such a parliament will be unacquainted, it seems, with the local circumstances of a kingdom "which it never sees," and will be at too great a distance to administer in time to the wants or wishes of the people, or to guard against excesses or discontents [Mr. Foster's Speech, p. 65.]. One might suppose from this statement, that the Irish parliament is in a continual progress through the island, or ready to fly at a moment from one end of it to the other, whenever wishes are to be gratified, or discontents suppressed. Does the British legislature, in its aggregate state, ever see more of Great Britain than is contained within the walls of this or the other House of parliament; or is it not the province of the executive ministers of government, not of the legislature, on sudden emergencies, to dispense instant favours or apply instant coercion, if the good of the community shall require the one sort of interposition or the other; subject, no doubt, to the censure of the legislature, if they shall unnecessarily on such occasions transgress, but entitled to indemnity if they shall appear to have acted wisely, in exceeding the bounds of their lawful authority?—"Since," as has been truly said, "neither peace nor war necessarily require the act of either legislature," [Mr. Foster's Speech, p. 53], and the supreme executive government in London is, by the constitution of the empire, entrusted with the care of repelling any sudden and unexpected invasion even of Ireland, by a foreign enemy, one would imagine that branches of that executive government which will continue resident in Dublin, might be supposed adequate to whatever immediate measures any emergency alike sudden and unexpected may call for, towards the suppression of riots, insurrection, or rebellion in that country. I am most willing and ready to allow extraordinary merit to the energy of the Irish parliament during the late fatal rebellion, which the concurrent exertions of both legislatures, of the executive government of both countries, and, above all, of the brave troops of Ireland and Great Britain, under the benign Providence of God, have so fortunately repressed, though I fear, not totally extinguished; but I should think it an ill compliment to the Irish parliament and the Irish nation, were I to suppose that the distinguished share they have had in the happy change which has been effected, could be in any great degree as-

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cribed to the impression made by a procession of 200 members of that parliament, with the mace at their head, through the streets of Dublin, from College Green to the Castle [Mr. Foster's Speech, p, 66]. It seems this idea of a resident legislature is to be carried so far as to warrant the supposition, that if Scotland had had its parliament sitting at Edinburgh, the conspiracy which has been traced to that country, would have been sooner developed, and more completely crushed. Is it then recommended that the Scotch union should be dissolved? Or is the parliament in London only competent to preserve tranquillity on the south side of the Tweed? It is asked, if a resident parliament and resident gentry cannot soften the manners, amend the habits, or promote social intercourse, will no parliament and fewer resident gentry do it [Mr. Foster's Speech, p. 64]? I answer this by another question, Has what is called a resident parliament done it? It has not: it is not pretended that it has.

It has been said, Will a legislative union appease Catholic discontent, or assuage the animosity of the Protestants? I answer, I am satisfied the separate parliament of Ireland never will, perhaps with safety it never can, admit the Catholics to participate in the higher political privileges of the state; and the Catholics will never quietly submit to an Irish parliament exclusively protestant, having learned to consider that exclusive jurisdiction as an oppressive tyrannical usurpation of the few upon the many. Perhaps a united parliament may find it safe to admit them; and if their admission were safe, their exclusion would thenceforward be unjust. I will not now enter into the argument of that grave and momentous question. I have often and long reflected upon it; and, if the occasion shall ever require it, I shall be ready freely to deliver my sentiments in regard to it. I do not think the present occasion calls for its discussion. I will only observe, that it seems to be the opinion, as well of some of those who best understand the interests of the Protestant establishment, and are most peculiarly bound in duty to guard and maintain them, as of some who have come forward in public the earnest and zealous opposers of the Catholic claims, should the present local parliament remain—of the venerable primate of Ireland, as declared in his speech on the 22nd of January last, and of Dr. Duigenan, as stated in his celebrated Answer to Mr. Grattan—that Catholic emancipation, as it is affectedly called, might, in case of the legislative incorporation of Ireland with this country, be acceded to without danger. The words of Dr. Duigenan are remarkable: as the passage is short, I will take the liberty of reading it:—"If we were one people with the British nation, the preponderance of the Protestant body of the whole empire would be so great, that all rivalship and jealousies between Protestants and Romanists would cease for ever; and it would not be necessary, for the safety of the empire at large, to curb the Romanists by any exclusive laws whatsoever."—If the Catholics should not be admitted into the united parliament, still they will not then have to complain that they are excluded by a great minority of the nation; nor will they be any longer exposed to that sense of a mortifying and galling inferiority, which they say it is the habit, which I fear it is in the nature, of their local legislature to excite, acted upon and stirred up to perpetual exertions of severe authority, by the jealousy and apprehensions to which the struggles of the Catholics continually give rise.

We have seen the invalidity of the reasons by which some of the supposed disadvantages to Ireland, likely to arise from the assembling of the common legislature out of that island, and at the metropolis of the empire, have been attempted to be proved. Another of those supposed disadvantages remains to be noticed. It is said, the present state of things keeps the purse of the Irish nation in the honest hands of an Irish parliament; and that if a number inferior to those chosen by Great Britain shall be sent from Ireland to a united legislature, they will carry this purse over, and, laying it at the minister's feet, deliver it up to his full power and uncontrolled discretion. [Mr. Foster's Speech, p. 58.] The strict economy of the Irish parliament, and its prudent resistance to the calls of the executive government for pecuniary supplies, however just its claim to that praise, will not, I believe, be admitted by the majority of those who have opposed a union. But has any body ever supposed that York, Bristol, and Liverpool, or Limerick, Cork, and Waterford, have run a greater risk than Westminster and Dublin, in confiding the power of their purse to parliaments assembled in those last-mentioned cities? Suppose a partner in a mercantile house,

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established in Cork, to come to England on account of the partnership, and with full power to act for it; if such a person, during his absence in this country, should make a draft or accept a bill for the general behalf of the concern, would there be more danger of injury to the house from an improvident exercise of his power in that respect in such case, than if he had been deputed with equal authority to some other city in Ireland, to Derry or Belfast, and had exercised it there?—But when such topics as these are urged, do not gentlemen forget that, according to the resolutions proposed to be carried up to the throne, the rate of taxation between the two kingdoms is to be regulated by fixed rules and principles, to be agreed upon previous to the union? The purse of Ireland therefore will, in a peculiar degree, have for its guardians not only the members Ireland shall elect, but those also chosen by Great Britain, as they can never concur in taxing that country without imposing a burden on this, in a proportion which Ireland as well as this country, and not in conjunction with it, but while still in its distinct and separate state, shall have sanctioned: and hence we have no occasion, here, to recur to the argument I sometimes submitted to the House, in order to show the little ground there is to apprehend, that the general interests of Ireland will be overlooked or sacrificed by a united legislature. In this material instance of taxation, the very selfishness of Great Britain herself will protect (since there are still those who will delight in viewing their interests as different) the separate purse of Ireland.—It seems to be chiefly for the purpose of meeting this argument that the alarms are raised to which I referred at the outset; lest the articles of union should be infringed to the detriment of Ireland, whenever an infraction of them may be thought beneficial to Great Britain. To give colour to these apprehensions, we are told of the disavowal of the compact of 1782. This, it is said, must create a suspicion that any compact made in 1799 may be treated as lightly [Mr. Foster's Speech, p. 99]. I have shown that no compact of the sort insisted on can have been intended in 1782; that whatever was then held out on the part of this country has been strictly adhered to; that the claim of the British parliament to legislate for Ireland has never been renewed, as I am satisfied it never will; but that when there is a compact between two distinct countries, if either of them shall break its part of it, the other may be able to resume its former situation, whereas, in a case of an incorporating union, that is impossible; and that therefore such a compact can only be broken by lawless and revolutionary violence; which, if it were attempted with success after a union, would dissolve the whole political machine, and is no more to be dreaded than any other imaginable and possible subversion of the state.

What has been in fact the case as to the Scotch union? No candid man, who is versed in the history of this country since that memorable transaction, will deny that its spirit, in all its clear and important parts, in all its fundamental and essential conditions, has been adhered to ever since with scrupulous and sacred inviolability. The contrary, indeed, has been often, and was early attempted to be proved by the violence of faction, and to serve the purposes of the day, though at the risk of no matter what public mischief and confusion. Such, among others, was the attempt in 1713, when, parties running high, the reluctance of the Scotch to submit to a general malt-tax was laid hold of, and their representatives persuaded, though upon a doubtful construction of one of the secondary clauses of the treaty, and one whose effect at best was only to be of temporary and short duration, to raise a cry that those articles of the union which were in favour of Scotland had been infringed; and even to bring forward a motion in parliament for its formal dissolution;* a motion which those who had encouraged it were far, I believe, from wishing to succeed, having done so merely with the hope that it would contribute to the overthrow of an administration to which they expected to succeed. In hunting for objections on the present occasion, the circumstances of that occurrence have been eagerly looked into. But as one of the last, and certainly not the least of those who have opposed the proposal of a union, scarcely appears to have thought they could be employed to any useful purpose on his side of the question, I do not deem it necessary for me to detain the House by any particular observations upon them. I do not exactly understand, after the candid declaration, that the extension of the late income-tax is neither a breach of any of the articles

* See Vol. 6, p. 1216.

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of the Scotch union, nor even suspected to have been meant as an evasion of it, why it is mentioned as affording an argument to persuade Ireland not to agree to a similar union. "Time and circumstances," it is said, "have set aside the great beneficial difference in taxation which induced Scotland to consent to a union." And we are told, "that instead of taxing the land, the income arising out of the land is taxed, and that the effect is therefore the same to the Scotchman as if the articles of union were broken." [Mr. Foster's Speech, p. 96.] Sir, I should like to ask, whether, when the tea, the coffee, the wine, the sugar, &c. a Scotchman purchases, with the income arising from his land, is taxed at the same rate as those articles are in England, it might not as well be argued that this alters the settled proportion of land-tax, and amounts to a virtual breach of the articles of union? But what part of the history of that transaction proves, that a difference in taxation was the ruling motive with Scotland upon that occasion? The ratio of the tax on land between the two countries was settled on particular grounds, in my opinion reasonable in themselves, and satisfactory to the parties concerned; they may be seen stated at length in De Foe's book. In regard to the taxation of a particular sort of beer or ale used only in Scotland, a difference was also stipulated for in favour of that country, and likewise an exemption from certain temporary duties then existing in England, and from any tax to be imposed on malt during the war. But as to all the other great duties of customs and excise then in force in England, and all duties to be imposed after the expiration of those temporary taxes, except in the case of the sort of beer I have mentioned, an equality of rates was expressly agreed to, though with this equitable qualification, that, besides a certain sum to be paid immediately, a fund should be created equal to such portion of the share of the common revenue which would be raised on Scotland, as might be applicable to the then debts of England; to be applied, in the first place, to the extinction of the debts of Scotland, and afterwards to objects of local improvement there. I conceive that Scotland, when she agreed to the union, looked to far other advantages than a general and supposed beneficial difference in taxation, a difference she could always insure without a union. She looked to advantages which, by increasing her wealth and general income, would enable her to flourish under an equal ratio of contribution—the points the two parties had agreed on excepted—to the common exigencies of the united state. Whether she has been disappointed in that motive for her conduct, and that prospect to which she looked forward, I will now proceed to inquire.

Indeed, that Scotland has thriven through the whole course of the present century to an extraordinary degree, in all the branches of national wealth and improvement, is a fact notorious to all who have attended to the progress of that part of the kingdom. But it is said, "the argument is shallow which attributes every increase of trade, of population, of wealth, in Scotland, from that day to this, to the union, as if nothing was due to the progressive state of the world during a century, and Scotland alone amidst surrounding nations, was to have remained stationary;" and it is added, "if such was the viciousness of her constitution, the miseries of her situation, or the depression of her resources, well might she have accepted any terms." [Mr. Foster's Speech, p. 104.] I do not believe it was ever the intention of any body to ascribe all the improvements of Scotland exclusively to the union. The general causes alluded to have no doubt operated there, but one might ask in this place, why those causes are supposed to have been of such powerful agency in Scotland since 1707, but of none in Ireland before and since 1782? It is often difficult to ascertain with exact precision the specific causes of national prosperity, and to assign to each its true share in the general effect. If the union put Scotland in a secure situation of participating in the influence of events and circumstances which were destined to meliorate all the parts of the British dominions, much was gained by that country, and thus far I think I have already proved. I have referred to the known oppression exercised towards her by her more powerful neighbour while they had separate parliaments, the continuance or renewal of which was, by the union effectually prevented. I have moreover shown that what England then practised against Scotland, though to her own detriment, and England and Great Britain long afterwards are accused of having practised against Ireland, may be again practised against her by a separate

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government remaining in this country. This is no threat; none now living will ever be so unwise or so unjust as to attempt it. But can they entail their wisdom or their justice on succeeding ages and their yet-unborn successors in influence or power? Arguments and facts, however satisfactory and numerous, might easily be adduced to show that the union has not merely proved of this negative advantage to Scotland, but has been in a great degree the direct cause of her increased prosperity. On this head the House cannot have forgot the convincing statements made on a former day by a right hon. gentleman peculiarly skilled in the history and situation of that country. I shall therefore content myself with adding only a very few circumstances to what was detailed upon that occasion. If I can make it probable that the trade of Scotland has increased since the year 1707, in a greater ratio than that of England, I think I shall have a right to conclude that this excess in the improvement of the former country has been owing to the union. That transaction was not likely to benefit England in the same proportion; other general causes of melioration would probably do so to a greater extent, from her superior advantages of climate, situation, and capital.

The facts I have to state are these: The Scotch duties of excise at the time of the union amounted only to 30,000*l.* those of customs to 35,000*l.*—or, together to 65,000*l.* At that time the customs of England were 1,341,559*l.* the excise 947,602*l.*; together 2,289,161*l.* The gross total receipt from the customs of Scotland in 1707 was 403,536*l.*; from the excise of that country 958,173*l.* Those two sums make 1,361,709*l.* In England the gross amount received in the same year from the customs was 6,124,346*l.* that from the excise 11,080,044*l.*—together 17,204,390*l.* Now, Sir, that sum large as it is, falls extremely short indeed of what it should have been if the advance in its amount had been in the same proportion as that which appears to have taken place in regard to the customs and excise in Scotland; for it will be found that by that ratio the amount for England would have been very near 48 millions. It may indeed with truth be said, that the rate of those duties was very considerably lower in Scotland than in England at the time of the union; but, although by the stipulations of that treaty they were (with the exceptions I have mentioned) to become the same after it in both countries, yet parliament, authorised so to do under the 14th article of the treaty, has in truth so greatly favoured Scotland since in respect of two of the main objects of excise revenue, malt and distilled spirits that the first in that country does not now, and did not in the year 1797, pay more than one-half, and the other not two-thirds of the English duties. It is also to be observed, that a heavy duty on many articles consumed in Scotland, such as, tea, sugar, coffee, &c. &c. and which is therefore in truth paid by that country, is now collected in England. But if another mode of comparison should be preferred, we may find the materials for it in De Foe. That writer informs us that it had been estimated that the customs and excise of Scotland, if put on the same footing with those taxes in England at the time of the union, would have produced—customs 70,000*l.*,—excise 40,000*l.*—in all 110,000*l.* Now, even this sum will be found to be, to the produce of those duties in England at that time, not as the present produce in Scotland is to that in England, but as it is to a sum exceeding that by which more than one-half, viz. 28,337,919*l.* Upon the whole, it is impossible not to see that the produce of those two great branches of revenue, which may be taken as tolerably exact measures of the trade, both foreign and internal, of each country, has increased in a much greater proportion in Scotland than in England.

But we are asked, "Has Scotland advanced in prosperity since the union as much as Ireland?" [Mr. Foster's Speech, p. 104.] Any one who had given entire credit to the frequent complaints of tyrannical oppression exercised by this country almost constantly towards Ireland, might be apt to conceive, that whatever shall make it probable that the improvement of Scotland had done much more than keep pace with that of England during that period, must tend *à fortiori*, to show that it must have greatly surpassed that of Ireland. But knowing how often those complaints have been made from party considerations, or dictated by spleen and ill humour, I do not think we ought to content ourselves with such a general presumption. No single branch of trade or manufacture, common to the two countries, can afford a satisfactory criterion by which to decide the question. Their

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linen trade has been compared, and calculations have been stated to show that Ireland has outrun Scotland very much in that branch. But linen, though a great is far from the only considerable manufacture of Scotland. It is admitted to be the only one of any moment in Ireland. Perhaps a comparison of the annual revenue of each will furnish a better test.—I think it will not be denied, that, to meet the extraordinary expenses of the times, the taxes in Ireland have been strained of late to nearly as high a pitch as is consistent with the ease, comfort, or industry of its inhabitants. If I may take this for granted, it will follow, that, of the two, that country which, in proportion to its population and natural advantages, yields the greatest annual amount of public income must be in the most prosperous situation.—Now, how does the case stand? Scotland is acknowledged to contain many fewer inhabitants than Ireland, though in extent the first somewhat exceeds the latter country; the soil of Scotland is much the least fertile; its climate assuredly is not so temperate as that of Ireland; and its ports and other natural advantages for foreign trade, one great source of revenue, are much inferior. Yet, with so many differences in favour of Ireland, it will be found that the gross revenue levied in Scotland in the year before last, came within considerably less than 100,000*l.* of that of Ireland: the latter amounted to 1,965,130*l.* Ir. equal to 1,813,966*l.* Br.; the former to 1,734,472*l.* leaving a difference only of 79,494*l.* According to the many advantages I have just stated as belonging to Ireland, if the two countries were in an equal degree of prosperity, the revenue of Ireland ought to have exceeded that of Scotland in an infinitely greater proportion.

But "has the population of Scotland kept pace in due proportion with that of Ireland?" [Mr. Foster's Speech, p. 105.] Sir, the population of Ireland is considerably greater, in proportion to its extent, than that of Scotland; but if the much smaller number of inhabitants of the latter possess as much more useful wealth, that is, if they can with equal ease to themselves, contribute as much or more towards the exigencies of the public as those of the former, it is very difficult to see how Ireland can be considered as in a state of more rapid progression in point of riches and individual or national prosperity than Scotland. I cannot help suspecting, however, that there are some great mistakes on the subject of the population of these kingdoms, and the progressive increase of numbers in each during the present century; that the numbers in Ireland have of late been greatly exaggerated, or those in Scotland (and, indeed, in England) much under-rated. It is said, the population of Scotland at the union was a million, and that it is now but a million and a half; whereas Ireland, whose inhabitants then were little more than a million and a half, has now a population of near four millions and a half [Mr. Foster's Speech, p. 105]. I do not know from whence these numbers, or, at least, some of them, may have been taken; but statements might have been found, according to which the comparison would have turned out still more to the advantage of the argument for the sake of which it has been made. According to De Foe, the number of inhabitants in Scotland at the time of the union was, instead of one, esteemed to be two millions; and most of the modern calculations have reduced them in our time to the number stated, of about a million and a half, [Chalmers's Estimate, p. 224, note. Sir J. Sinclair's Scotland, vol. 20, p. 621.] some considerably under. [Dr. Webster's Tables.] On the other hand, all the authorities I have happened to meet with for raising the population of Ireland so high as four millions and a half, according to what I have just now mentioned, except that most respectable one to which I then meant to refer, are to be found in publications which furnish others of equal weight for taking it still higher, namely, at five millions.*

But, Sir, is it conceivable that Scotland having in the last hundred years improved so much in trade, manufactures, and agriculture, having been visited by no violent epidemical distempers, and certainly not having on the whole suffered more, notwithstanding the two short rebellions in 1715 and 1745, than Ireland from internal disturbances, should have expe-

* Four millions and a half, Messrs. Hamilton Rowan and Tone: Jackson's Trial: Report of the Secret Committee of the House of Commons of Ireland 1798, App. No. xxii.: Mr. Keogh, Authentic Statement of the Proceedings of the Roman Catholics of Dublin, 9th April, 1795. Five millions, Mr. Lewins, and Mr. Emmett; Report of the Secret Committee of the House of Lords of Ireland, 1798, App. No. vi.

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rienced either a diminution of one fourth or more, or even but an increase of one third of her population, while that of Ireland has been multiplied four or five fold? It is true, more authentic calculations do not carry the population of the latter so high. Dr. Price, in 1773, reckoned it only 1,908,207, and he then computed that of Scotland at one million and a half. [Reversionary Payments, p. 185.] Lord Auckland, in his Letters to lord Carlisle in 1779, says, "the common large calculation" of the numbers in Ireland was at that time two millions. Lord North, in the debate on the Irish Propositions in 1785, stated them at 2,300,000. In the same debate, a gentleman, who is a native of that country, admitted them to be under two millions and a half. So late as 1792, Mr. Burke, throughout his letter to sir Hercules Langrishe, takes them at three millions. In that year, however, the subject having been much attended to in Ireland, particularly by the late Mr. Bushe, one of the commissioners of the revenue there, according to the accounts which were then exhibited to the House of Commons, the number of houses in Ireland was computed at 701,102, which, reckoning 5 persons to each house, gives 3,505,510 for the number of inhabitants; at $5\frac{1}{2}$, 3,856,061; and at 6, 4,206,612. Dr. Beaufort thinks it reasonable, "when we take into consideration the great populousness of the poorest cottages, the many crowded houses in Dublin and other large towns, and that the university, barracks, hospitals, and public offices, are not included in the hearth money returns." to rate the number of persons, on the hypothesis of only 701,102 houses, at the medium reckoning of five and half to each house, and to state the population on the whole at about 3,850,000 [Memoir of a Map of Ireland, p. 142.] He appears to have had communications with Mr. Bushe, on the subject, and therefore this may be conjectured to have been also the opinion of that very accurate and intelligent person. This last computation may, perhaps, be near the truth. My scepticism, is chiefly with regard to the received opinions as to the population of Scotland, concerning which, I think, I could adduce many facts and arguments, besides the general considerations I have hinted at, to render it probable that it approaches nearer that of Ireland, though, no doubt, very considerably under it, than has of late been generally supposed.

Among the reasons drawn from the supposed peculiar situation of Scotland before the union, which are thought to show that such a measure might be very advantageous to that country, without being so to Ireland, are two, concerning which I will say a very few words. They have been adduced, I presume, principally as instances of the comparative, "viciousness of the constitution of Scotland, and to justify the opinion that it was not worth preserving." 1. One is, "that the two Houses sat together," i. e. that there were not two Houses, "and that the king, by his power of creating peers, could at any time overpower the voices of the Commons." 2. The other, "that the Scotch parliament, even with this imperfect constitution had not a deliberate power, because it could discuss no subject but what was previously prepared by the lords of the articles." [Mr. Foster's Speech, p. 101.] 1. As to the first, there certainly was but one House in the Scotch parliament, which continued in that respect to resemble the original form of the English; but it is a point of considerable doubt whether an act of that parliament, which was originally considered as composed of four distinct estates, and after the abolition of the prelacy, and to the very last of three; 1. noblemen; 2. barons, i. e. representatives of shires; and, 3. burrows, i. e. members for boroughs; was valid without a concurrence of the majority of each estate. There are great authorities on both sides of the question [Craig de Feudis, lib. i. dieg. 7, sect. 11. Mackenzie's Institutes, p. 402. Wight on Elections, p. 83.]; and the very doubt seems to prove that, in all cases of importance, such concurrence had, in fact taken place. In the lists of the divisions on the treaty of union preserved by De Foe, it appears that the votes of each estate were kept distinct: and that on every question divided upon and carried, there was a majority of each. Be this point, however, as it may, it would seem that the crown had not found it expedient to exercise its prerogative, by creating an excess in the number of peers; for, in fact, at the time of the union, the whole number of noblemen in the parliament of Scotland was but 154, while that of the commoners was 156. [De Foe, Wight, Robertson, &c.] Early in the preceding reign no less than 26 members for counties had been added at once to the representative part of the legislature of Scot-

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land: afterwards an additional parliamentary borough was erected; and a very short time before the union, Mr. Fletcher of Saltoun had proposed to provide by statute, "that in all time coming, for every nobleman that should be created there should be a baron added to the parliament." [Fletcher's Works, p. 283.] His motion did not, indeed, pass: but from the known history of the Act of Security, which the popular interest in that very parliament had been able not only to carry there, but to force the queen to assent to, is it too much to conclude, that if the method of outnumbering the commoners by creating new peers, had been attempted, which is supposed to have been so easy, such a motion would have been less unsuccessful? 2. As to the lords of the articles, what has been observed on that subject is clearly the effect of oversight: many years before the union, by an act of the Scotch parliament, that institution had been totally abolished, and it made as little a part of the constitution of Scotland in 1707, as the court of Star-chamber, or High-commission court did of that of England.

Before I quit this subject, of the advantages Scotland has derived from the union, I must beg leave to take notice of a passage or two in Smith's Wealth of Nations; from which inferences have been drawn or surmised, as if that judicious and impartial writer had not conceived that that event had tended to improve the prosperity of his native country. We have been told here, that he has imputed the increased trade of Scotland to the establishment of banks. He has certainly said, that within five and twenty or thirty years from the time in which he was writing, many private banking companies had been erected in every considerable town, and in many country villages of Scotland, and he gives it as his opinion, "that the country had derived great benefit from that circumstance." [Vol. i. p. 442] I have no intention to question that opinion. But it will be found that Dr. Smith is very far from considering the banks, either public or private, as the exclusive cause of the increase of trade in Scotland. He says, he had heard it asserted, that the trade of Glasgow had been doubled in about fifteen years after the first erection of banks there, and that the trade of Scotland had been more than quadrupled since the first erection of the public banks at Edinburgh; one in 1695, the other in 1727:" and immediately adds, "if either of them have increased in this proportion, it seems to be an effect too great to be accounted for by the sole operation of this cause."

Other passages, however, are mentioned, to show that he did not think the union promoted trade or manufactures in Scotland. [Mr. Foster's Speech, p. 106.] One is as follows: Of all commercial advantages which Scotland has derived from the union, the rise in the price of cattle is, perhaps, the greatest." This is an extraordinary proof that he "did not think that it derived any commercial advantages from it." But it seems this must be a very poor advantage to Scotland, because the policy of Ireland has been to impose duties in order to check the export of live cattle. [Mr. Foster's Speech, p. 106.] Sir, till all the circumstances of the two cases shall have been compared, till it is made out that the imposition of those restrictive duties is good policy in Ireland, till it is then proved that, being so, it would have been good policy in regard to Scotland, and till it is shown, that because a legislative union between Scotland and England opened a free export of cattle from the former, therefore a similar union between Ireland and Great Britain must necessarily open a like exportation from Ireland; till these positions are established, I do not see what possible advantage the able advocate, who has resorted to the authority of Dr. Smith on this point, can derive from it in support of his argument. Dr. Smith's favourite doctrine is, that agriculture is preferable to commerce, and that the commerce most connected with agriculture is the best; and he mentions the effect of the union in regard to the price of cattle in Scotland, to show that "it has not only raised the value of lands in the Highlands, but has been the principal cause of the improvement of the low country."—Another passage referred to for the same purpose is this: "The price of wool was reduced by the union, excluding it from the great markets in Europe, and confining it to the narrow one of England." [Mr. Foster's Speech, p. 106.] Permit me to add to this the part of the context which immediately follows; viz. "The value of the greater part of the lands in the southern counties, which are chiefly a sheep country, would have been very deeply affected by this event, had not the

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rise in the price of butcher's meat fully compensated the fall in the price of wool." [Smith's Wealth of Nations vol. i. p. 369.] Taking the whole therefore together, it is clear the author thought this restriction had, on the whole, been of no positive disadvantage. But it is not a restriction confined to Scotland, nor any essential or necessary part of the treaty of union; it was part of a general system for the whole united kingdom, thought at the time, to be for the good of the whole. I am not now called upon to give an opinion on this *vexata questio;* I will only observe, that the parliament of Scotland had long acted on the same principle; that if the united legislature shall ever come to think that it is sounder policy to allow the exportation of wool, there is nothing in the articles of union to prevent the extension of that freedom to Scotland; and that in such case it probably would be extended to that country. In the mean time it will be recollected that, for the consent of Scotland at the time to admit of the prohibition, a valuable consideration was to be paid out of the general equivalent stipulated for by the 15th article of the treaty.

Indeed, Sir, I cannot disguise my astonishment that Dr. Smith should have been called as a witness on the present occasion; but as he has been produced, I hope I may be allowed to use the legal privilege permitted in such cases of a cross-examination; and I will show the House, by reading a passage where he expressly treats of a union between Ireland and Great Britain, what the real sentiments of that author were on the subject. The gentlemen cannot dispute either the credit or competency of an authority to which they themselves have chosen to refer: "By a union with Great Britain, Ireland would gain, besides the freedom of trade, other advantages much more important. By the union with England, the middling and inferior ranks of people in Scotland gained a complete deliverance from the power of an aristocracy which had before oppressed them. By a union with Great Britain the greater part of the people of all ranks in Ireland would gain an equally complete deliverance from a much more oppressive aristocracy, not founded, like that of Scotland, in the natural and respectable distinctions of birth and fortune, but the most odious of all distinctions, which more than any other animate the insolence of the oppressors, and the hatred and indignation of the oppressed, and which commonly render the inhabitants of the same country more hostile than those of other countries ever are. Without an union with Great Britain, the inhabitants of Ireland are not likely, for many ages, to consider themselves as one people." [Vol. 3, p. 460].

Among the evils with which the opponents of an union alarm the people of Ireland as likely to befal their country from that measure, are an increased emigration, and the permanent or temporary non-residence of a great number of persons of rank and opulence. The general complaint against absentees is of a very long standing. For my own part, I have never been of the number of those who imagine that law and positive regulation can with effect, or ought in propriety to be applied in restriction of the natural liberty which belongs to every individual, of fixing his residence, exercising his talents and industry, or spending his income, wherever he thinks it most convenient or ageeable. A general *ne exeant regno* would be a strange part of the system of any government, and that country must be of a singular description which requires that its natives should be imprisoned within its limits by the sanction of penal laws and pecuniary mulcts. If you can but restore, or rather establish tranquillity, police, the security of life and property, in Ireland, depend upon it the happy soil and salubrious climate of that favoured island, its almost unrivalled advantages for trade and agriculture, added to the powerful sentiment which attaches mankind in general, with a fond psepossession to the place which gave them birth, will fix at home, or attract with all the riches their abilities or diligence may have acquired for them in other parts of the world, such numbers of Irishmen now prompted to emigrate or detained from returning by the unsettled state of their native country, as will more than counterbalance whatever non-residence may arise from the periodical sittings of the common parliament of Great Britain. That non-residence will be only occasional. It will reach little farther than the members of the legislature and their families. The seat of judicature and the local executive government will, I presume, continue where they are; and I believe those who frequent the gayer walks of life will not suppose that the votaries of pleasure and dissipation in Ireland will think the circumstance of the Irish parliamentary represention resort-

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ing to London any great addition to the allurements of that place. That part of the population of this metropolis and of Bath will remain pretty much as before. Indeed, I cannot help thinking there are several strong reasons in favour of the probability, that, on the whole, the fear entertained of a diminution of wealth and population by an increase of absentees would not be verified by the event. Will the House give me leave here to recall to their recollection the observation of a noble lord (Hawkesbury) on this part of the argument, which struck me as of great weight, namely, that the importance of a seat in the united and imperial legislature, the election to which, whether in Great Britain or Ireland, would then be indifferent to many persons anxious to obtain it, would be felt by men possessed of property and interest in the latter kingdom as much greater than that of one in her present local parliament. They would therefore have a more powerful motive for attending to the cultivation of their influence there; and this could only be done effectually by frequent residence on their estates, and the expenditure of a considerable part of their Irish income, perhaps of their English also, in Ireland. This must particularly happen in regard to county elections, in favour of which sort of representation I make no scruple to acknowledge my predilection, and to those in towns where the right is popular and extensive. If the absence of persons of distinction and fortune were to increase, we have heard the very respectable opinion of an hon. gentleman (Mr. Peel), who seemed to speak on the subject from reflection and personal observation, and who must be considered as deserving peculiar attention in regard to it, that the merchant and manufacturer would probably feel their means and disposition for exertion expand, and their efforts become more successful; that they would, as it were, breathe a freer air, by the removal from their neighbourhood, of the splendor and dignity of rank and hereditary opulence; and that, as the flourishing condition of trade and manufactures naturally tends to augment the population of a country, this effect would much more than counteract the mischief apprehended. The hon. gentleman spoke, indeed, with liberal and laudable sentiments of respect for that aristocracy, which forms so essential a part of our excellent constitution, but he seemed to entertain the idea that commerce and industry, though they live by the demands and consumption of the great, thrive best at a distance from them—

"Urit enim fulgore suo, qui prægravat artes
Infra se positas."

With great deference, however, I doubt the justness of his opinion, because it both differs from the most general sentiment, and militates against the arguments in favour of that frequent and easy intercourse between the different, but intimately connected orders and classes of our great civil and political system, which is so gratifying to our feelings, and seems so consonant to reason.

But as to the supposed tendency of a parliamentary union to produce an increased emigration and non-residence of the great in Ireland, I own I consider the experimental knowledge we have, in this as in other respects, derived from the case of Scotland, as of much more weight than any conjectural *à priori* arguments which can be suggested on the one side or the other. It has often been stated, and indeed never denied, that no nobility and gentry reside more at home than those of that country. They almost universally pass the summer on their estates, occupied in the pleasures of rural hospitality, and the improvement of the national agriculture by encouragement and example; and many of them spend the rest of the year in Edinburgh. The wonderful advances that capital of the country has made in its size, population, wealth, convenience, and elegance, since the union and removal of its parliament, are notorious. I will not say that the union has caused this; that it has had a chief share in producing the great general improvement in Scotland, I think I have shewn to be extremely probable; but it is evident, at least, that the union has not prevented the increased prosperity of Edinburgh. Yet the advocates against that measure in Scotland were as loud and as positive in their prophecies, that this antient seat of majesty, on the removal of the legislature, would sink into poverty, misery, and desolation, as many in Ireland have been of late, on similar grounds, in foretelling to the great and respectable metropolis of that kingdom, that its ruin will be the infallible and speedy consequence of the measure now under consideration. Indeed, the common people of Dublin have had this topic so impressed on their minds in every possible way, that

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many of them, I believe, have at last been brought almost to give literal credit to the ironical prediction, that when the parliament shall cease to sit there, the town will become such a perfect *rus in urbe*, as to furnish a new source of provisions for victualling the British fleet, by the extensive pastures into which its streets and squares are to be converted. It seems almost ridiculous to say that such sort of arguments can have succeeded, yet I verily believe they have to a very considerable degree. Nay, more, I have seen it asserted in some publication against the proposed union, with a confidence which hardly could have existed without the author's own belief of the fact, that Edinburgh, whatever may be pretended to the contrary, has, in truth, been in a constant state of decay ever since the loss of the parliament. The only answer such an ignorant assertion seems to deserve is that ludicrous one I have read in one of the polemical writers in favour of the measure, who supposes himself to be told by a correspondent that he has found with regret the fact was really so; for that upon inquiry among some gentlemen and ladies, natives of Scotland, and inhabitants of Edinburgh, they had assured him, that that ancient city had suffered so very much from the fatal event of the union, that the Scotch had been actually under the necessity of building a very large new one close to it. Sir, a learned gentleman of our sister kingdom, whose tract against the union is certainly the performance of a man of abilities [Jebb on the Irish Union], has, however, a very curious way of arguing on the fact, in which he admits, that the union has not occasioned emigration and non-residence in Scotland; but the analogy of which, in regard to what there may be reason to expect in the case of Ireland, he will by no means, allow. The fact he admits in these very strong terms: "Can there be adduced five instances of men of rank in Scotland, however powerful and extended their English connexions, whose chief or least temporary residence is not in Scotland?" And again: "a Scotch absentee is only a political or commercial speculator, who will in the end enrich and adorn his native country: his money, acquired where it may be, and after absence ever so long, centers there." But this, it seems, is all the anomalous effect of a peculiar nationality in the Scotch which a similarity of circumstances has no tendency to produce in any other people, and especially not in the Irish; though many of the inhabitants of one part of that country are not very distant descendants from Scottish ancestors, and most of the rest throughout the kingdom are probably either sprung from one common Celtic stock with the Highlanders, or else of that Saxon or Teutonic race who appear, in the early ages of the Christian æra, to have over-run and settled themselves in all the low country of Scotland as well as of England. An Irishman, it seems, is a being of a different sort. "Scarcely an instance," it is said, "occurs of the wealth and influence obtained by Irish men in England, producing advantages to Ireland; they seem ashamed of the name, and eager to divest themselves of all pretensions to it" [Jebb p. 49.]. Alas! Sir, it is painful to see that men of understanding can resort to such grounds of opposition, or suffer themselves to fall into reasonings and opinions scarcely fit for the most vulgar minds, and entirely unworthy of the cultivated sense which seems to belong to this gentleman, and ought to be the attribute of all who profess themselves either lawyers or statesmen. If the difference in the general conduct of the Irish and Scotch were really as notorious as he has persuaded himself it is, the experiment of the effects of a union upon the former has not been tried, and he does not appear to have made any inquiry how the case stood as to absentees from Scotland previous to 1707. He found an easier solution of the supposed difference in the hackneyed imputation or praise of Scotch nationality: he says it is a *praise* [Jebb, p. 50], and when duly regulated I think it is, though I verily believe not more due to the Scotch than, where circumstances happen to be similar, to the Yorkshire, Cornish, or Welshman; or indeed to Frenchmen, Swedes, Danes, Germans, or Italians. I imagine this gentleman would take it very ill, I think with reason, if a stranger were to pronounce so unjust a judgment as he has done upon his countrymen. Unjust I certainly think it is; I myself could mention various striking instances to the contrary of what he has alleged. I could select from many others the example of a respectable nobleman of that country, who, after filling with great honour and credit some of the principal offices of government here, retired to Ireland, and successfully devoted the remainder of his days to the

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improvement of that part of the kingdom where his chief property lay; having ever been, through the course of his political life, a watchful guardian of the interests and well-being of the whole. I mean the late lord Hillsborough, whom I mention with the more pleasure, because he who understood the affairs of Ireland so well, is known to have been always a strenuous and anxious advocate for a legislative union. Sir, I could in like manner specify examples of Irish gentlemen in other walks of life, who having by their talents and exertions in remote countries, in the East and in the West, acquired eminence and fortune, have returned to their native land, and vesting their riches in purchases there, have become active and useful magistrates, able commanders of the national troops, and members both of the one and the other house of parliament. But even if it were true, that such instances have been more rare in Ireland than in Scotland, would it be any very extravagant conjecture to suppose, that the real reasons have been the greater tranquillity which prevails in the one in consequence of a union, and the more turbulent and unsettled state of the other for want of it? Would not those indisputable circumstances of difference account for such a difference in the conduct of the natives of the two countries, more satisfactorily than supposed distinctions of national character, which may serve to amuse in a farce, or occasion merriment or quarrels in a coffee-house, but can never be entitled to hold a place in grave discussion or serious debate.

But, Sir, the gentlemen who in this place have resisted the progress of the business now again brought before us;—as well those who object to the competency and general expediency;—as well the very few who I think have gone the length of declaring a rooted opinion that the union never can, at any time or with any sort of consent, be adviseable;—as those who profess, some a belief, others even a wish, that it may at some future period be adopted;—all appear to concur in contending, that the present time and occasion are unfit; that the people of Ireland are not prepared; that they have not been habituated to the contemplation of the measure, as those of Scotland had been for above a century; that they have inveterate prejudices against it, which have now universally manifested themselves, and which ought to be first by gentle and gradual means removed; whereas, as has also been alleged, it was always the favourite project of Scotland. Lastly, two other plans have been propounded,—plans widely different the one from the other,—by which it is supposed that those disorders and misfortunes of Ireland which a legislative union would only exaggerate might be cured, and the dangers which are apprehended even to Great Britain from such a union, prevented. As to the time, I differ so much from those gentlemen, that if on other occasions the measure would have been wise, I believe it has now become necessary. In support of which opinion, I cannot imagine a more convincing argument than the long avowed fear of a union, among that too numerous class of men in Ireland, who have now openly professed their plan and object to be, a separation. I need not again mention the declarations of Tone, or the confessions of Emmet, M'Nevin, and others. The proof is deeply engraven on all our memories. It has been written in characters of blood over the whole face of that desolated island. But when I know that the associates of those very men by whom the arms were forged which were intended for the destruction of the true independency, liberty, and constitution of their country, and who prepared that moral and political poison which was to corrupt and extinguish every virtuous and religious, every British principle, in the minds of their countrymen, are full of trembling apprehensions, lest this salutary antidote should be administered in time—can I, aware as I am of the profound, no less than wicked views, and the no less extraordinary than perverted talents of some of those men—can I withstand such strong confirmation of the opinion, which on other, and more general grounds, forces itself so powerfully on my mind, that we are come at last to that only alternative—speedy union, or early separation?

It is said, we ought to wait for a moment of peace and general tranquillity. If by this is understood general internal tranquillity in Ireland, I am afraid to judge of the future by the past, the adjournment must be, *ad Græcas Kalendas*. But are we to wait till the general peace of Europe shall be restored? Alas! there seems at present no very near or distinct epoch discernible for that happy event. And in the mean time, our enemies, in directing

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their arts and their arms to their favourite object of wresting from us our sister kingdom, are to enjoy the advantages accruing to them, both from the want of a true political consent of parts in the present complex and ill-constructed machine of our imperial legislation, and from the cunning industry of their revolutionary allies in Ireland, who even now are endeavouring to obtain the co-operation of some of the men who have hitherto been their most determined foes, and the most zealous friends of Great Britain, by working on their blind and unfounded jealousy of the British parliament, and entrapping those infatuated persons into a conduct which, if not counteracted, may enable them to accomplish the fatal end of their detestable conspiracies. Was the union with Scotland undertaken or carried into effect in a time of external or domestic peace? Far otherwise. But then it is said, that when it was negotiated and completed, the arms of Great Britain and her allies were triumphant. In answer to this, it need only be observed, that the treaty must be considered as having been commenced and in progress from the very beginning of the reign of queen Anne, and when affairs abroad wore a very gloomy aspect. As to those at home, they must have cast a very careless, or a very partial eye, on that period of our history, who do not perceive, in the circumstances of a disputed succession, the yet recent concussion of the Revolution, the numerous adherents of the exiled family in both kingdoms, the jarring interests of the two countries, and the dissentions between them on account of religion and commerce, a complication of political difficulties as great, though of a different nature, perhaps much greater, than any that exists at present. In truth, though at first sight it appears reasonable to think that times of tranquillity are best adapted to the discussion and accomplishment of great political arrangements, this speculation, on closer attention, does not seem to be warranted, either by the nature or history of mankind. On the contrary, I believe it will be found, that men and nations are too indolent for great exertions, "enterprises of pith and moment," while in the undisturbed enjoyment of quiet prosperity: and that to all their most memorable efforts of that sort, they have been stimulated by the urgency of personal or national calamity, or at least of private or public difficulties and embarrassment.

I admit that the idea of a legislative union was long familiar in Scotland; but I deny that it now comes unawares, and by surprise upon Ireland. I am, on the contrary, well persuaded, that such a plan for that country must have been uniformly present to the minds of every minister, every statesman, every politician, every enlightened member of parliament, every man, in short, in that kingdom, qualified and entitled to judge of such questions, for a space of time considerably longer than what elapsed between the union of the crowns and that of the parliaments of this country. I will endeavour to prove this to the satisfaction of the House, by a deduction of clear historical facts. To say nothing of the actual, though imperfect and illegal incorporation under the usurper, you know, Sir, that in the reign of Charles 2nd by a report of the council of trade in Ireland to the lord lieutenant and privy council there, dated the 25th March 1676, that board expressly recommended, "That endeavours should be used for the union of the kingdoms under one legislative power, proportionably, as was heretofore done in the case of Wales." I cite the very words of the Report, which is stated to have been drawn by Sir W. Petty, and who, in his treatise called "The Political anatomy of Ireland," written, I believe, a few years before, had delivered his individual opinion to the same purpose. "If," says he, "both kingdoms were under one legislative power and parliament, the numbers whereof shall be proportionable in power and wealth of each nation, there would be no danger such a parliament should do any thing to the prejudice of the English interest in Ireland: nor can the Irish ever complain of partiality, when they shall be freely and proportionably represented in all legislatures." In 1698, Mr. Molyneux, in his "Case of Ireland," clearly points to a representation of Ireland in a united parliament as a most desirable arrangement for that country. His words are these: "If from these last mentioned records, it be concluded that the parliament of England may bind Ireland, it must also be allowed that the people of Ireland ought to have their representatives in the parliament of England. And this I believe we should be willing enough to embrace: but this is an happiness we can hardly hope for." [London edition in 1770, p.74. There is a preface

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to this edition, reported to have been written by the late Mr. Flood, with which it was republished in Dublin in 1773]. And here I cannot help noticing a very singular fraud, or negative sort of forgery committed in an edition of Molyneux's work, which was printed in Dublin in 1783. In that edition the words, "and this I believe we should be willing enough to embrace: but this is a happiness we can hardly hope for;" were totally omitted. This circumstance I first saw pointed out in a note to a very able pamphlet lately published, intitled. "Reasons for adopting an Union between Great Britain and Ireland." I have since been favoured by the author of that pamphlet with a copy of the castrated edition, the publisher of which could not have proved so strongly, in any other way, at once his own hostility to the measure of a union, and the sense he justly entertained of the weight of such an opinion in its favour as that of Molyneux, the able and learned advocate of Irish independency.

But, Sir, in 1703, at the time when a similar measure was so particularly in the contemplation of the English government with regard to Scotland, a legislative union was in a manner sued for, and sued for in vain, by the parliament of Ireland. This appears sufficiently from the Journals of the two Houses of that parliament; but I have had an opportunity also of seeing the correspondence at that time of the duke of Ormond, then lord lieutenant, and of his chief secretary Mr. Southwell, and the lord chancellor Cox, with the government here, from which it is still more manifest that many of the leading characters in the country, the chancellor particularly, Mr. Brodrick, the speaker, and I think even the secretary himself, were very desirous of the measure, but that the lord lieutenant was lukewarm, and the ministry in England totally averse to it. That parliament met on the 21st of September, and on the 1st of October the Lords voted an address to the Queen, which concluded with these words: "As we are sensible our preservation is owing to our being united with the crown of England, so we are convinced it would tend to our farther security and happiness to have a more comprehensive and entire union with that kingdom." I shall show immediately the answer sent from England to this address. As it appears not to have been the intention of the administration here to listen to such a suggestion for the kingdom of Ireland, and supplies, not general measures of policy, seemed to have been considered as the material business of the session, one is not surprised to discover in Mr. Southwell's first dispatches on its opening, considerable impatience as a minister, whatever his private opinion as to a union might be, at finding the House of Commons more willing to deliberate on matters of that sort than ready to satisfy the pecuniary exigencies of the government. On the 25th, in a letter to lord Nottingham, he says, "It is a miserable fatigue we are under. We are forced to use a great deal of claret, and a great many arguments, and all little enough. There is a most strange mixture of Scotch and fanatical principles, which sours the mass. They are jealous of every thing; and were it not that my lord lieutenant has a great personal interest, nothing at all would be done." This he means in regard to the supplies, which the lord lieutenant endeavoured to obtain for three years, but which attempt, after every effort, he was obliged to abandon, a grant even for two having passed with difficulty.—In a short time, both Houses formed themselves into committees on the state of the nation. Two days before the House of Commons sat, Mr. Southwell writes to lord Nottingham (Oct. 2, 1703) his conjectures about the event, as follows: "Next Monday is appointed to consider of the state of the nation: and I believe it will end in this, after considering some difficulties they lie under, to make some representation, full of temper and moderation, for gaining some relief in those points; and many even talk of a union. When the committee took place, it appears that the wish for that measure was still more general than he had foreseen. "This day," says he, in a letter written at night to the same nobleman, (Oct. 4) "the House of Commons had appointed to go into the state of the nation; and after some hours sitting, and considering the many misfortunes the country lay under in point of trade and other circumstances, all the speakers concluded that they did, in the most earnest manner, desire a union with England, and they have appointed Friday next to consider that matter," &c. The House sat in the committee on several different days; and the Speaker, Mr. Brodrick, took an active part in framing certain resolutions, which were reported

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by Mr. Molesworth, the chairman, on the 11th; and the last of which was, "that her majesty be most humbly moved, that her subjects of this kingdom may be relieved from the calamities they now lie under, by a full enjoyment of their constitution, or a more firm and strict union with England." These resolutions were afterwards formed into a representation addressed to the queen, which concluded nearly to the same effect. On the 25th the House of Lords resolved, "Upon due consideration of the present constitution of this kingdom, that such an humble representation be made to the queen, of the state and condition thereof, as may best incline her majesty, by such proper means as to her majesty shall seem fit, for promoting such a union with England as may qualify the states of this kingdom to be represented in the parliament there."

I do not find that any farther step was taken by that House in consequence of this resolution. The queen's answer to their address was couched in obliging terms, but took no notice whatever of the suggestion relative to a union. That to the representation of the Commons was in less gracious language. "Her majesty having considered of the representation made by the House of Commons in Ireland, has commanded this answer to be returned: that the first part seems to relate to matters past in parliament, and the other part (in which a union was mentioned), consisting only of things in general, her majesty can give no particular answer at present, but will take them into her consideration."

It is difficult to conceive what good reasons could have been stated by the administration of England at that time for rejecting in so harsh and disdainful a manner, advances towards a measure which would unquestionably have been to the advantage of Ireland. Whatever *ratio justificativa* they might have been able to plead, it is probable the *ratio suasoria* was, that the business was chiefly promoted in Ireland by the party they supposed hostile to themselves. To show how little difficulty the carrying of it into execution was likely to have encountered there, I will read the concluding paragraph of a letter from sir Richard Cox, the chancellor, to lord Nottingham, dated Feb. 13, 1703-4: "There is no remedy so proper for both kingdoms as some sort of union, which would conduce to enrich and strengthen England, and establish the English interest here, and make it prosper: for in that case all the British would be good Englishmen; and since we do not capitulate, and you may be your own carvers, it seems worthy your serious thoughts to promote so good a work."—And let not gentlemen suppose that the union was then considered merely as a refuge from the abject condition of a subordinate legislature. Whatever topics the warmth of opposition may have introduced into the representation of the Irish Commons, the transactions of both Houses during that session completely prove how fully they acted as the uncontrolled branches of a parliament perfectly *sui juris*. The Commons with difficulty granted supplies for two years, instead of the three which had been demanded; and this, after calculating the establishment on the lowest scale, and debiting the treasury with the outstanding arrears of revenue, contrary to former practice. The other House, without regard to any offence which might be taken in England by a solemn resolution asserted their supreme and exclusive right of appeal, and actually exercised it by issuing an order under which the earl of Meath was put in possession of an estate, directly in the teeth of a decree of the House of Lords in England [Irish Lords Journal, vol. 2, p. 24, &c.]. The spirit of that House in the business of their judicature may be farther judged of from a paragraph in the letter I have already quoted of sir Richard Cox to lord Nottingham: "Your lordship may be pleased to remember, that from the beginning, and particularly in the closet before my lord treasurer, I expressed more apprehension from the debates of the Lords than of the Commons; for I knew the former would think themselves bound in honour to vindicate a jurisdiction they claim as inseparably inherent to a House of Lords, and which they might conceive the Lords in England could not oppose without shaking their own foundations."

About the time when these proceedings were going on in the parliament, the subject of a union between Ireland and this country appears, by many publications, to have been a very general topic of discussion out of doors. Sir Thomas Brewster, who had been a member of the Irish House of Commons, published, in 1702, a pamphlet, intitled, "New Essays on Trade," in which there is a long chapter on the subject. I beg leave to read the

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following short passage:—"By this measure, future rebellions would be prevented, which that kingdom was never long free from. Ireland would be then England, and the nation become more formidable abroad, and safer at home.—Ireland making, as it were, one continent with this island, which it would become in effect, and more usefully than if it were so in reality."—In a book printed in the same year, intitled, "Miscellanea Aulica," there is a short paper with this superscription: "A Proposal of several Officers, and other Gentlemen of English Extraction in Ireland, for a Union of that Kingdom with England." There is no date to it; but it must have been originally drawn up either in the reign of Charles 2nd, or of king William, as appears by this introductory paragraph:—"His majesty's good subjects in Ireland, upon the hearing of a proposal made, not long since, for the uniting England and Scotland, with all obedience and submission humbly conceive it a means conducible thereto, if the like union of England and Ireland, under one legislative power assembled in one parliament, might be resettled *de jure*, in something like the manner it was formerly *de facto*, to the facilitating his majesty's gracious government of both kingdoms, dissolving of many intricate difficulties, taking away much of the root of difference and discord between the now many parties in his majesty's said kingdoms, and strengthening his hands against all opposition, both at home and abroad."—It seems pretty clear, from the title and style of this proposal, that it was designed to be laid before government, and was the act of some known and considerable class of persons; so that it most probably was a matter of general notoriety.—I will mention one other publication of that time, which expressly purports to have been submitted to the consideration of queen Anne and her parliament. The title is, "An Essay upon a Union of Ireland with England, most humbly offered to the Consideration of the Queen's most excellent Majesty, and both Houses of Parliament." The date, in the copy I have seen, is "Dublin, reprinted 1704."—This author states his opinion, that while Ireland continues a distinct kingdom, the only precautions England can take to prevent any danger that may arise to it from that country, are, 1st, to entrust the government there entirely in the hands of Englishmen; or, 2ndly, to check the growth of that kingdom in point of trade and wealth, so that it may not be able to attempt any thing against the constitution of England. He afterwards enters into a variety of arguments to show the equal injustice and impolicy of either of those methods, and then comes to his proposal of a union, which he supports in a manner very clear and forcible, on considerations respecting the interests and relative situation of the two kingdoms, proving himself (whoever he was) to have been a person of more than ordinary information and abilities.

Thus, Sir, I think I have shown that this idea, now said to be so novel to Ireland, must have been in the general contemplation of all thinking people in that country, from the days of Cromwell to the period of the union of England and Scotland. Upon that event, the hopes of those true patriots in Ireland, who wished for the blessing of a like union to their own country, seem to have revived, while the English ministers of that day continued to feel the same disinclination to it, which had been manifested by those in power at the beginning of the reign. In the speech of the earl of Pembroke, then lord lieutenant, at the opening of the session on the 7th July, 1707, so memorable and important an occurrence as the union with Scotland was not even mentioned. But the Commons, that very day, resolved on an address of congratulation to her majesty, "on the accomplishment of the great work of uniting her majesty's kingdoms of England and Scotland." Mr. Brodrick was chairman of the committee who prepared it, and it is drawn in such warm language of admiration, as clearly evinces how great an impression the subject had made:—"We crave leave to lay hold of the earliest opportunity humbly to address your majesty with our most hearty and sincere congratulations, for the inward joy and satisfaction you are blessed with, and the glory you have acquired, by accomplishing the union of your majesty's kingdoms of England and Scotland. This great and glorious work, which your ancestors, with their utmost endeavours, laboured to accomplish, lay above the reach and wisdom of former times, and seems to have been reserved by Heaven for your majesty's reign.—May God put it in your royal heart to add greater strength and lustre to your crown, by a still more comprehensive union."—The Lords expressed themselves to the same effect,

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though not quite in such direct terms:—"May your majesty go on and extend your favour to all your subjects, till none are excluded from so great a blessing, but such as, by their own frowardness or disaffection to the public good, bar themselves from the general advantages of your majesty's reign."—The queen's answer to the Commons was in these very general and evasive terms:—"The Commons may be assured, that nothing shall be wanting on her part to make the union of all her subjects as extensive as is possible."—And although, in their new address of thanks for this answer, they seem to have been desirous to give it an interpretation applicable to the measure they had in contemplation, declaring that "The assurance her majesty had been pleased to give them, had inspired them with hopes of an addition to the many blessings they enjoyed under her most auspicious reign;" yet no real encouragement being given to their overtures on the subject, the matter was prosecuted no farther. The English government and the Irish parliament had one very natural sentiment in common, the apprehension of danger from the great number of Catholics in Ireland, who continued attached to a dethroned monarch of the same religion with themselves. But the parliament seems to have looked to a legislative union as the surest protection against this danger. The ministers in England preferred the establishment of a system of severe penalties and disqualifications against Papists, restrictive of the rights, as well civil as political, which, till then, they had enjoyed in that country equally with their Protestant fellow-subjects. And the attempt to engage the queen in the measure they had recommended having failed, the parliament, seeing no third course, thought themselves compelled to co-operate with the crown in adopting the other expedient. It has, accordingly, been truly remarked, by a great authority in the sister kingdom, "That it was not till the proposition to unite the legislatures of the two countries had proved abortive, that the great code of the Popery laws of Ireland was enacted" [Lord Fitzgibbon's speech in the Irish House of Lords, 13th March 1793].

I do not find the matter of union to have been afterwards revived in the Irish parliament, but it still continued to be a very general subject of public discussion. In Cato's Letters, a work of universal circulation about the middle of the ensuing reign, Mr. Trenchard, who was peculiarly versed in the concerns of Ireland, recommended it in the following terms:—"Ireland is too powerful to be treated only as a colony. If we design to continue them friends, the best way to do it is to imitate the example of merchants and shopkeepers; that is, when their apprentices are acquainted with their trade, and out of their time, to take them into partnership, rather than let them set up for themselves in the neighbourhood." About the year 1735, the excellent Berkeley published a book on the interests of Ireland, called "The Querist," from many passages in which he appears to have had the expediency of a union strongly impressed on his mind. In the 90th query particularly, he thus expresses himself: "Qu. Whether if it be not the true interest of both nations to become one people, and whether either be sufficiently apprized of this?" Dean Tucker's proposal for "A Union with Ireland," was first printed in 1751, in his "Essay on Trade." In 1752, a tract appeared under the title of "A Proposal for uniting the Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland," which was generally understood to be the production of the late marquis of Downshire; and, if I am not much misinformed, a legislative incorporation was, during the whole of his life, a favourite object with that experienced statesman, and strongly recommended by him to the different persons successively at the head of government.

Sir, I trust the selection I have made has fully proved my assertion, that this subject has not come by surprise, on the people and parliament of Ireland. Indeed, Mr. Burke tells us, in his Letter to sir Hercules Langrishe, "that he had heard a discussion concerning a union amongst all sorts of men ever since he remembered any thing." It cannot have escaped the attention of the House, that none of those of whom I have made mention, ever seem to have entertained a suspicion of that new discovery—the incompetency of the Irish parliament. What has been stated to show the long and continued attention which must have been given to the subject in Ireland, goes a great way also to prove, that there must always have been a great number of persons there, in that sphere of life in which alone men are to be found in any country capable of understanding and judging of such matters, who were strongly of opinion, that a legislative

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union would be of the utmost benefit to theirs. It has, however, been very confidently averred, that the Irish in general have always been averse to a union; insomuch, that whenever it has been an object there to render a new lord lieutenant unpopular, it has been customary to give out, as a watch-word, that he had been sent over for the purpose of effecting that measure. I know, Sir, that the art of running down a lord lieutenant, in former times, has been carried to a great degree of perfection in that kingdom, and, perhaps, it may not yet have fallen into absolute disuse. But is it thought that such a "politic trick" (as De Foe expresses himself on a similar subject) furnishes a very serious proof of the disinclination of the majority of that nation to the measure? Will those who reason in this way deny, that there have been times, and those not very remote, when a cry that the object of a chief governor's mission was what is called "Catholic emancipation," would have been no ineffectual means of exciting the mob of Dublin against him, perhaps of embarrassing or overturning his government? Friends as they are to the admission of the Catholics to an equal participation of political rights, will they consent to a similar argument being built against that favourite object of theirs on such a circumstance? The truth is, catchwords and quaint abstractions have a wonderful effect sometimes on that multitude; "Protestant ascendancy," and "Catholic emancipation," have each had their day,—both, I believe, coined in the same mint. "Parliamentary incompetency" may, perhaps, be the favourite at present; but that phrase has too little singularity of diction, and is too plain, as well as too obviously false in its meaning, to have a very long reign.—In fact, however, when artful people have chosen to raise an alarm, or excite prejudices in Ireland against a union, they have not satisfied themselves with a vague and general description of it; they have accompanied that term with explanations naturally and justly tending to render the measure offensive and obnoxious to the nation. Do we find, when the council of trade and the parliament, when Molyneux, and Berkeley, and lord Hillsborough, recommended it, that they lost the good will of their country? But when, as in 1759, the union supposed to be in contemplation, has been represented as a measure intended to subject the Irish nation "to the same taxes with England;"* when it has been represented, that "a union would be the participation of British taxes without British trade, and render the kingdom of Ireland a wretched colony, governed by a few excisemen;"† one does not wonder that the indignation of the populace should have been raised against it.

As to the supposition of a universality of sentiment at present manifested in Ireland against the union, I must not expect that gentlemen on the other side will pay the attention I think they deserve to my reasons for dissenting from it, especially as it was two months ago affirmed in this place, that there were then authentic documents arrived to prove the fact. According to my information, however, at that time only certain meetings in Dublin and its neighbourhood, and in a few of the counties in Leinster, had declared any such opinion; Cork had addressed his majesty in favour of a union; and pretty active endeavours had been used, but, up to that time at least, in vain, to procure addresses and resolutions against it from various respectable counties in the north, the west, and the south. Since then, indeed, new addressers and resolvers have appeared, but we have also seen various counter-resolutions. Those of the grand juries of the first city in magnitude and opulence next to Dublin, and of the first county, that of Cork, are particularly to be distinguished.—Sir, I should be one of the last to treat with neglect the real sense of the nation on this or any subject; or to say, that even through such irregular and uncertain organs as county or corporation meetings, the voice of the people is not worthy of the most serious attention. Yet when I look back on the history of this country for the last century and a half, and on that of France for the last *decade* of years, as I suppose I ought to call it; when I call to mind the addresses to Richard Cromwell on his succession to the protectorate, those in Scotland against the union of 1707, and those in France calumniating the virtuous and saint-like Louis the 16th as a tyrant, and extolling the bloody Robespierre and his associates as the saviours of their country; I must be pardoned if I cannot consider such acts and instruments, as very certain tests

* Annual Register, vol. 2, p. 169.

† Irish Parliamentary Debates, vol. 12, p. 177.

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of national opinion—much less as unchangeable tests; for, satisfied as I am of the importance and even necessity of this measure for the safety of Ireland, I will not think so ill of one of the most intelligent, as well as most liberal-minded nations that exists, though withal, at times, somewhat hasty and irritable, as not to believe, when the arts that have been employed to excite their jealousy, and alarm, their honourable pride, shall have been detected, and the illusions of that sophistry, which has very unfortunately been taken for sound argument by a few able men among them, and has been dressed up with all the skill and talents they possess, to be circulated among the people at large, shall have vanished in the hour of sober judgment and reflexion: that the great majority of the present opponents will change their sentiments, and feel the truth of the old adage, that second thoughts, in matters of such moment, are generally the best.

This the Scotch nation have fully experienced by the blessings they have derived from the union of 1707, at first so strongly opposed by so many people of every class and description in the country. That this was the case is as clear, I believe, as any historical fact whatever; and therefore it has seemed very strange to me to hear the resistance made in Scotland at that time, treated by some gentlemen as having been slight and insignificant, in comparison to the opposition now existing in Ireland to the union between that country and this; and the measure represented in truth to have been the general wish and desire of the whole nation. Indeed, Sir, mistaken notions of the dignity and advantage of a separate and independent legislature, exclusively their own, having existed among the Scotch, from the first junction of the two crowns, in, at least, as exalted a degree as that to which they are now carried in Ireland, I do not understand upon what evidence it is alleged that, even at that early period, that nation was anxious for a complete legislative incorporation with their southern neighbours. James the 1st, who had become the common sovereign of both, might desire it. He was certainly desirous of a stricter union than the mere descent of the English monarchy upon him had produced. And a legislative union was undoubtedly in the contemplation of some of the great statesmen, with whom he seems chiefly to have consulted on the subject, particularly sir Francis Bacon. But, from a consideration of the articles agreed to in Scotland on that occasion, it will be found, that the actual treaty which became the subject of negotiation was only of a federal and commercial kind, and intended to establish an equal communication of civil and personal rights; but not to incorporate the parliaments; and the parliament of that country expressly declared, during the progress of the business "that the kingdom should remain an absolute and free monarchy [Spottiswoode, p. 505]." When, after the Restoration, in 1670, the commissioners for both kingdoms came to treat for an efficient incorporation of the two legislatures, though the Scotch showed themselves perfectly well inclined to the general proposition, yet, by insisting on terms to which they must have been sure England could never agree, namely, that the whole body of the Scotch parliament, the full number of their Peers and Commoners, should be joined to those of England; they proved very clearly that they were not disposed to negotiate upon any admissible condition. Accordingly, at that time, the affair went off, in truth, on the part of Scotland.

But to come to the treaty which was carried into effect—that the great majority of the truly wise and sober men of the country, the real patriots and genuine statesmen, and I would add too, the men of the truest and most elevated and enlightened ambition, earnestly wished for it, and were vigilant in seizing every occasion which could tend to its completion, I most readily allow. But that the factious, the seditious, and the rebellious, that many not obnoxious to such charges, but who had either confined their views to that limited sphere of action, or, like the celebrated Fletcher, possessing great and cultivated minds, had heated their imaginations with notions of government incompatible with the ancient institutions of their country, or any form which an incorporation of the two existing governments could assume, but which from the peculiarly disorded state of Scotland at the time—chimerical as they were—they vainly hoped they might see realized; that all those and various other classes of men, forming, perhaps, a majority of the whole, reckoning by tale instead of weight, by numbers instead of property, were the declared and active enemies of the union, is, I believe, as certain, as it is, that, by

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virtue of the manly and steady disregard with which the administration of that day treated their hostility and violence, one of the most important and fortunate political transactions recorded in the annals of the world, was brought to a happy conclusion. I would recommend to any man who really has doubts on this point, the reperusal and comparison of the contemporary authors who have written on the subject, particularly the two most remarkable among them, De Foe, the able historian and advocate; and Lockhart, the defamer and libeller, of the union. Permit me to read a passage from another writer of the time, bishop Burnet, as the matter of it gives us strong encouragement to cherish the most favourable prospect of the issue of the present still more important measure. "The union," says he, "of the two kingdoms was a work of which many had despaired, in which number I was one; and those who entertained better hopes, thought it must have run out into a long negotiation for several years; but, beyond all men's expectation, it was begun and finished within the compass of one. The body of the people showed so much sullenness, that probably, had any person of authority once kindled the flame, they seemed of such combustible matter, that the union might have cast that nation into great convulsions. The duke of Queensbury despaired of succeeding, and one about him wrote to the lord treasurer respecting the ill-temper the nation was generally in, and moving for an adjournment, that so, with the help of time and good management, those difficulties, which seemed then insuperable, might be conquered." He adds, "the lord treasurer told me his answer was,—that a delay was, upon the matter, laying the whole design aside."* Nay, Sir, in the House of Lords, when the treaty came to be debated there, lord Haversham stated, "That though the articles of union were ratified by the Scotch parliament, yet the bulk and body of that nation seemed to be against it. Have not," he said, "the murmurs of the people there been so loud as to fill the whole nation, and so bold too as to reach even to the doors of the parliament? Has not the parliament itself thought fit to suspend their beloved clause in their act of security, for arming their people, during the session? Nay, has not the government, by advice of parliament, issued a proclamation, pardoning all slaughter, bloodshed, maiming, &c. that is committed upon any who are found in any tumults there?"* To an infinity of evidence of this contemporaneous sort, might be added the result of that evidence as it has been collected by every historian who has written on the subject in later times; but I will only mention a short sentence or two from one who, in declaring his opinion of the advantages the union has produced to both countries, but especially to Scotland, expresses himself in the following strong and glowing language: "The union of the two kingdoms, into which the English entered with so much facility, and the Scotch with so much reluctance, was yet of infinitely higher advantage to the latter than the former. An inseparable connexion was thereby formed between them, by which Scotland was to experience and augment the happiness, the glory, and the stability of England. They were to be constant companions in prosperity and misfortune; and if England is ever to perish like Carthage, Sparta, and Rome, its sister nation will prolong the struggle, hold the fortunes of the victor in suspense, and exert, in extinction and death, that elevation of character, and that disdain of a master, which distinguish and ennoble the revolutions of her history."†

We have been told that a majority of each of the three classes who composed the parliament of Scotland voted for the Union. They did so; but it is remarkable, if you take each of those three classes, which were called estates, separately, and suppose the concurrence of a majority of each necessary, which perhaps it was, that in each of the two estates of commoners that majority was but four, the rest of the total majority of thirty-three being composed of twenty-five noblemen. On the other hand, if you suppose an absolute majority *per capita* to have been all that was requisite, then that total majority fell short by four of the aggregate number of the votes in favour of a Union on the divisions in the two Irish Houses taken together, on the 22nd of January last, the first day the matter was agitated there. It has been stated in this place, in the very face of the proof I have mentioned, that the number of addresses

* Burnet's Own Times, Vol. 2, p. 462.

* See Vol. 6, p. 564.

† Stuart's History of Scotland, Vol. 2, p. 56.

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and addressers in Scotland against the measure was comparatively small, and the symptoms of active opposition out of the parliament scarcely any. How must the diligent and accurate spirit of investigation which belongs to those who made that assertion, have deserted them in their inquiries on this occasion! Otherwise, could they have overlooked the vast number of those addresses, amounting to between 80 and 90, while those against the commercial propositions in 1785, which were thought so numerous and proved so formidable, were in all but 62, and the extensive and diversified description of the parties subscribing—barons, heritors, and freeholders of, I believe, every county but one in that kingdom, burgesses of almost every borough, synods, presbyteries, and parishes in every district of the country? In short, they were so numerous, and so various, that it was not without colour, that in a famous protest, prepared by the opposition of that day, it was asserted, "That the subjects of this nation of all ranks and qualities have generally shown an utter aversion to any such union as is contained in the articles now lying before the House" [Lockhart, p. 298].

Then, Sir, as to the activity of the opposition without doors, have the accounts, contained in the authors I have quoted, entirely escaped those gentlemen; of the riots at Edinburgh, the insurrection at Glasgow, the army of 7,000 men in the west, ready and on the wing to advance to the capital and disperse the parliament? Thank God! we have seen nothing of any attempt towards such treasonable methods of controlling the deliberations of the Irish legislature on this occasion. Is it worth while to answer the observation, that the addresses were in general (they were not all so) against the terms of the Union contained in the articles? Surely it cannot be imagined, that many persons would have been found to join in objecting to entertain or deliberate upon a mere general proposition of union undefined by any specific terms whatever. But it is well known that the framers and instigators of those addresses objected principally to that essential part of the articles, the incorporation of the legislatures. It is therefore clear that a much stronger prejudice, a much more violent spirit, discovered themselves against the Scotch Union than it has been possible to excite in Ireland on the present occasion. The same prejudice certainly continued for a few years afterwards, fomented by the partisans of the exiled family, on the one hand, and all who wished to thwart the existing administration, on the other; and this prejudice, no doubt, contributed very much to increase the temporary infatuation of the Scotch Lords in 1713, who moved for the dissolution of the Union. But the good sense of that nation, and their early feeling of the benefits daily accruing to them from the measure, soon appear to have made converts, even of the still numerous class of adherents to James. A most striking fact in proof of this was mentioned in a former debate by my right hon. friend the secretary of state. He did not think it necessary to state authorities for a circumstance so well known to many persons conversant in the events of those times; but from his not having done so, occasion was taken to suggest a doubt concerning it. A few words will take away every pretext for any such doubt. The fact stated was, that the Pretender in 1715, two years only after the affair of the malt, knowing the resistance to the Union which had been so very general throughout Scotland at the time it was in agitation, had, in the manifesto he was about to issue, declared his purpose to be that it should be dissolved, but that upon better inquiry he discovered that the country had already become so sensible of its beneficial consequences, that such a declaration would injure his cause, and that he had therefore altered his design, and omitted the intended clause in his proclamation. Now, Sir, this fact, besides other proof, is completely established by an extract lately printed in Dr. Somerville's History of Queen Anne, from the manuscript memorials of sir John Clerk, a gentleman of character and eminence in the beginning of the century, member of the last parliament of Scotland. Those memorials were written fresh as the events occurred, for the use and instruction of his own family. The words of the manuscript are these: "The Scots were so sensible of the benefit of the Union, that at the time of the rebellion, in 1715, the Pretender was obliged to alter that part of his proclamation which promised to repeal the Union, and to express his determination to leave it to the decision of parliament."

The apprehensions of inconvenience to Great Britain which I have heard stated

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have been, 1st, removal of capital; 2nd, the increased numbers in the House of Commons; 3rd, some supposed incongruity between the national habits and character of the people of Ireland, and of those of this country, which may occasion an injurious change in the character, modes, and principles of deliberation and decision of our legislature. To these I may add an objection which is of a general nature, and not applicable more to the case of the one country than to that of the other; viz. 4th, that an Union on the basis of the resolutions now before us will be imperfect.

1. As to the removal of capital, I will only say a single word or two, in addition to what I have already very shortly observed on that subject; namely, that if there is, in the overflowing capital of this country, a great deal beyond what is engaged in its commerce and agriculture, that surplus cannot be more advantageously laid out for Great Britain than by the employment of it in what will then make a part of one and the same kingdom. We are indeed told, "that the capital of England is so fully employed, that there is none to spare." [Mr. Foster's Speech, p. 86.] But I know not how that opinion is to be reconciled to the eagerness with which, to this moment, we see men ready to engage large sums in every new speculation affording a reasonable prospect of security for their principal, though with a very moderate interest upon it—many people of late to a great extent of adventure, running the hazard of failure altogether, and yet agreeing to confine their returns, whatever may be the success of the undertaking, within the narrowest limits of what is usually considered as fair mercantile profit, many to 10, some even to 5 per cent. How is it to be reconciled to the daily investments of large sums in the stocks, while the dividends amount to little more than 5 per cent? or to the known fact, that an immense proportion of the trade of many parts of the continent, I fear no inconsiderable share of that of the enemy, is carried on with British capital; not to mention what, even under the present forbidding circumstances, is engaged in the commerce of Ireland itself?

2. Some gentlemen dread the accession of 100 members to the British parliament. This it is thought, may change the cast and quality of this House as a public assembly, and render it too popular and tumultuous. Sir, I will not deny that I have felt some difficulty on this part of the subject; but, Sir, I have considered, on the other hand, that this, at most, is but a conjectural disadvantage, and of a very secondary sort at all events, when balanced against the calamity of separation, which I think I see is already put into the opposite scale.—I have also recollected, that by the original principle of our constitution, the crown, and of course the English parliament, could increase, without any fixed limitation, the number of representative members; that in the reigns of Henry 8th and his descendants, this prerogative was exercised to a great extent and without inconvenience—I may say to the improvement of this branch of the legislature; that the same power continued to exist till the union with Scotland, in which country it also obtained, and had been exercised from time to time; that in like manner the incorporation on that occasion of 45 new members with the former number in England has produced no such inconvenience as is suggested; and lastly, that I have not observed or heard that the great and frequent fluctuation in the attendance here from under a hundred to perhaps five hundred and upwards, has been the cause of any essential distinction in the nature of parliamentary measures, considered in a constitutional view; for I do not think we are to be guided, in this part of the argument, by any consideration of the effects of such fluctuations, as to party, to points of a momentary nature, or to what are sometimes called trials of strength between individuals, or this and that class of men, on matters not of important consequence to the state and the community.

3. The next apprehension I am not sure whether I rightly understand; but I think it was stated as if it were conceived that the habits and turn of the Irish gentlemen who may be elected to the common parliament, were likely to be such as to lower the standard, as it were, of British representation. I think it was said, that they are not of a substance and materials which can safely coalesce with this parliament; that they would corrupt and contaminate the whole mass. Sir, I believe nobody imagined that in so liberal and respectable a quarter as that from whence this observation came, it was meant to express any sentiment derogatory to the general and natural disposition of the Irish

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nation. I presume the idea was, that partly from the imputed corruption of Irish politics, partly from the savage ignorance of the lower orders of people there, partly from the inveteracy of religious animosity, it was too probable, that the generality of the persons returned for Ireland would bring with them modes of thinking and acting, less pure, less rational, less dispassionate, than those which this hypothesis seems to assume as prevailing in this kingdom.—But, Sir, however much disposed I feel myself to think with just respect of the virtue and understanding of British legislators, I must beg leave to say, that if the hon. gentleman to whom I allude had been well acquainted, which he professed not to be, with that class of men in Ireland, from among whom the representatives would of course be for the most part selected, he could not have suffered so idle a suggestion to have entered his mind. Vulgar prejudice and national complacency do, with the vulgar of all countries, establish a sort of general impression of inferiority in the moral and intellectual qualities of neighbouring nations. I trust the members of this House are far beyond the reach of such impressions. For my part, I am well persuaded Ireland is likely to furnish at least her fair proportion of genuine worth and genuine wisdom to the common stock of the imperial parliament; and that whatever defects may be supposed to belong to the modes and practice of legislation there, they arise from the nature of a local, as connected, in the manner, I have endeavoured to explain, with an imperial parliament, and are in no respect founded on any peculiar imperfection in the description of the individuals who compose it. It has been well and justly observed in this House, by one whose generous and elevated sentiments on this question stood in no need of the weight of his high character to impress them on our recollection, that "the people of Ireland have not been less distinguished than those of Great Britain, in corresponding stations of life, for eloquence, for literary and scientific acquirements, and for those talents and exertions which have established the naval and military renown of the British empire." They will not, on their more intimate connexion with the rest of that empire, forfeit the pledge and earnest they have thus given. Indeed, Sir, we have already had sufficient examples in this very place to warrant that expectation; for can Great Britain herself boast of many of her sons who have more illustrated this assembly than some of those natives of that country, who in our own days have sat in it, and who must already have occurred to the minds of all who hear me?

4. As to the objection that the union, as proposed, will be imperfect, and on that account not answer the ends intended, it was, I think, grounded chiefly on the distinction which will probably remain, and to which some of the resolutions point, in the financial systems of the two countries. Sir, this very objection was made on the part of England, by some noble lords in the other House, at the time of the union with Scotland. When the treaty came to be debated in the House of Lords, lord Haversham, in the speech I have already mentioned, said, "There is another reason why I am against this union, because I cannot think it an entire union. The exempting articles, I mean the 20th, whereby heritable offices and superiorities are reserved; and also the one-and-twentieth, both which Oliver, by an act of state, was so wise as to abolish;* but especially their act for securing their presbyterian church government and general assemblies, seem to me like those little clouds in a warm calm summer's day, that are generally the seeds and attractives of approaching tempest and thunder."† This was one of those many prophecies which in the event have fortunately not been accomplished. Yet the differences which were allowed to continue and still remain betwen the local arrangements

* The wisdom and policy of abolishing the heritable jurisdictions was in the contemplation of king James, even before his accession to the crown of England, as appears by the following remarkable passage in the book called Basilicon Doron, addressed by him to his son prince Henry: "But the greatest hinderance to the execution of our laws in this country are the heritable sheriffdoms and regalities, which, being in the hands of the great men, do rack the whole country. For which I know no present remedy, but by taking the sharper account of them in their offices: using all punishment against the slothful that the law will permit; and ever, as they become vacant for any offences committed, to dispose them never heritably again; pressing with time to draw it to the laudable custom of England, which she may the easilier do, being king of both, as I hope in God ye shall." p. 48.

† See Vol. 6, p. 564.

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and institutions in Scotland and England (several of them too, financial) were of much greater magnitude than any that are either proposed to be maintained, or indeed, considering the much greater similarity which already obtains, can exist after the union with Ireland, between those of this part of Great Britain and of that country.—I believe a perfect uniformity in all the branches and minute parts of the frame of government, never did take place as to all the different districts and divisions of the same country and nation, unless, perhaps, in some of those diminutive sovereignties which bear a nearer resemblance to corporations and municipalities, than to such states as England and Ireland. In France, under the monarchy, though the general outline and distinguishing features were in a great degree uniform throughout, yet there prevailed in the different provinces, senechaussées, balliages, &c. of which that kingdom was composed, a remarkable diversity in regard to many important particulars, such as the rights of property, real and moveable; the administration of justice; the imposition and amount of taxes, and so forth; as to which, the different provinces with their subdivisions, after their successive incorporations with the kingdom at large, retained their ancient laws, usages, and customs. The same observation is true of the other great states of modern Europe, and will be found equally so in the instances of similar incorporations, as far as they are known to have taken place in ancient Greece and Italy. In England itself, the unity of the government has never been thought imperfect, because of the different rules of property, the different forms and courts of judicature, the different local customs and usages, which obtain in the principality of Wales, in the duchy of Lancaster, and in the various districts, cities, boroughs, liberties, honours, and manors, throughout the kingdom. On the accession of James the 6th of Scotland to the throne of England, the judges,* gave it as their opinion that there could be no incorporating union of the two kingdoms without an entire conformity of laws in both. Sir Francis Bacon was of a different sentiment. He seems to have been strongly convinced of the great inconvenience of the attempt to establish so strict a uniformity, and that it was by no means necessary. "It is," says he, "a matter of curiosity and inconveniency to seek either to extirpate all particular customs, or to draw all subjects to one resort of judicature and session; it sufficeth there be uniformity in the principal and fundamental laws, both ecclesiastical and civil."* Even with regard to manners he observes, "that a consent in them is to be sought, indeed, industriously, but not forced; for that nothing among people breeds so much pertinacity in holding their customs, as sudden and violent offers to remove them." And, after some argument to show the difficulty of composing a general and uniform code for the two kingdoms, he concludes, "that such a general code would be too great a work to embrace." According to the judicious reflection of a modern author, "Experience has now happily confirmed the justness of that great man's sentiments, and both nations have reason to rejoice that the subtle reasoning of the judges met not with the same regard as on that occasion, in the reign of the great grand daughter of James." At that time, when the long projected incorporation came to be carried into effect, it soon appeared that an endeavour at any such conformity of laws would be attended with insurmountable difficulties. Their ancient jurisprudence and tribunals were therefore, in general, preserved to each country, and even a fundamental difference sanctioned between the ecclesiastical laws and establishments of the one and the other, which lord Bacon seemed to think scarcely practicable.

It remains for me now, before I conclude, to say a very short word or two of the two counter projects which have been recommended to the House. The one is, a repeal, without condition or distinction, of all laws in both countries affecting Roman Catholics, and a free communication and permanent security of every branch of trade to the sister kingdom. By these means, it is said, you will produce the only desirable union between Great Britain and Ireland, the union of hearts and affections. As to the first part of this scheme, I have no scruple to state my concurrence with those who think that an attempt to grant what is called Catholic emancipation, while the local parliament remains, would excite such a struggle between property and

* Co. 4 Inst. c. 75, p. 347.

* Bacon's Works, vol. 2, p. 157.

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numbers, as would greatly aggravate many of those mischiefs which now exist in Ireland, tending to revolution and separation, through the medium of a civil war of the most destructive and ferocious kind.—I have, in a former part of what I have said, anticipated the answer to the commercial part of the proposal, and shown, that if we were inclined, or it were right to grant every thing that may still be wanting to an entirely free trade, we could not give permanent security to the grant otherwise than by union.—With regard to the union of hearts and affections, I will not recur again to any discussion of that sentimental kind of connexion, of late so much talked of by persons not apt to be led astray by a glare of words, but which, unless arising from one of a coarser but more intelligible sort; that which a permanent and unchangeable identity of interests and an indissoluble *conspiratio et consensus partium* in the political machine have a necessary tendency to produce and perpetuate; is, in my judgment, mere idle and unprofitable declamation.—The other project is the reverse of this; if I have understood it, it might be thus expressed: "Beware of the Catholics of Ireland; tread back the rash and inconsiderate steps you have taken in their favour; erase them again from the catalogue of electors, and re-enact against them that Popish code, the relaxations of which, at least till the last in 1793, have been the universal boast and praise of his majesty's reign on both sides of the channel: let there, however, be this modification in your proceeding, that although all Romanists, as they were called, shall be *primâ facie* considered as having, by their presumed share in the late conspiracy and rebellion, forfeited all the privileges their sect had recovered within the last twenty or thirty years; yet each individual among them may take upon himself the burthen of proving his innocence of that charge; and, having established it, (a jury being summoned, I suppose, to try each particular case), he shall not only be restored to those privileges, but shall, on such purgation, be put individually into the possession of every right belonging to Protestants." The hardship, cruelty, impolicy, and impracticability to any extent, of this scheme, I am satisfied did not, when it was thrown out, occur to the honourable proposer, in the forcible manner in which they must impress the minds of those who have had occasion to attend much to the late history and present condition of that kingdom. But the numberless difficulties which would belong to the execution of its detail, in establishing again a religious and Protestant, not a geographical and English pale, and in separating, man by man, as they should present themselves to the outlet of that ideal fold of penalties and disabilities in which it is proposed to enclose and coop up the body of the Catholics, the innocent from the guilty, the sheep from the goats, were pointed out in so clear a manner immediately after the plan was stated to the House, that it would be in vain to attempt to add any thing to what was then said.—Sir, I am too sensible of the unusual length of the intrusion I have been guilty of on the time and indulgence of the House to continue it still longer, by any other apology than this, that as it has certainly not been my habit often to trouble them, so it shall be my practice in future to avoid trespassing on their patience, unless, perhaps, on some rare occasions, like the present, where, being particularly led by a sense of duty to the consideration of any question of importance, I may feel it to be an irresistible part of that duty to submit to them the grounds of my opinion, and the reasons and motives for my vote.

Lord *Sheffield* said:—Mr. Speaker; I wish it to be understood, that I support the resolutions and address, in confidence that the assurance given by a noble lord in an official situation in Ireland will be strictly observed, namely, that ministers will look to the sense of parliament and of the country, before the measure of union shall again be brought forward there; and that assurance being given, I am not sensible of any sufficient argument that should prevent the British parliament from giving some general explanation of the arrangement it is disposed to make, more especially as I observe that scarcely any man in this country objects to the principle of the measure; nor can I suppose, that a nation so well informed and so much accustomed to political considerations as the Irish, should, for a long time, persevere in refusing to receive or examine what may be proposed from the British parliament; and for these reasons I wish to trouble the House with a few observations.—We cannot be much surprised at the alarm which has taken place in Ireland. The word union was suffered to be banded about there for many months with-

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out the slightest attempt on the part of the ministers to explain the terms of it. The aid of designing men, and of those prejudiced from partial and local considerations, was scarcely necessary to take advantage of this circumstance: the apprehensions of Ireland had always been, that an equal and favourable union would not be granted: and no small part of that people were made to believe, that their liberty, their independence, their dignity, and almost the existence of the nation, would be done away by their becoming one and the same with the most independent and most respectable nation in the world. But, in truth, the measure of union was ill-prepared for Ireland, and Ireland was ill-prepared for union. It is not without competent information that I am convinced, if the outline of the liberal proposition for union which is now offered, had been at first properly communicated, and with all the plainness and candour which suit the Irish character, it would have been very differently received; and it is not my opinion alone, but the opinion also of those who are not friendly to the measure, that it might have been accepted, at least it would have prevented all that misrepresentation and misapprehension which might well be expected without some previous attention. I can hardly imagine a case, in respect to which, until understood, more jealousy was likely to be entertained than this of a legislative union; otherwise the measure being really so necessary and so advantageous to Ireland, the strange abuse of the words "Dignity and Independence," which have been so entirely mistaken, would have made little impression. I can suppose it will be unpleasing at first to acknowledge, that the premature opposition was the result of an ill-founded jealousy. Yet that acknowledgment, and the consequent departure from an hasty opposition to the measure, is no more than may be fairly expected from the candid openness of the Irish character.

It is not now the question whether the measure has been brought forward and conducted as it should have been, but whether the British parliament should do what depends on it to obviate the mischief which must arise from independent and separate legislatures existing within the same empire, whether we should relinquish a measure which seems necessary to the general security and welfare, or take the present opportunity of stating the outline of it. I shall not trouble the House with a repetition of historical inquiry into the causes of the present state of Ireland, nor with many references to the reports of the Lords and Commons of that kingdom. The causes and the proofs are but too plain. The notoriety of numberless melancholy facts, which demonstrate the wretched and dangerous condition of that country, with reason alarms every thinking man: it is an unanimous opinion in this country, that something is necessary to be done to preserve Ireland; and there seems to be almost a general conviction, that it can be done only by a legislative union. For my part, I cannot see the measure in any other light than that of being absolutely necessary. It has long been my opinion, and every thing which has happened in Ireland, and in respect to Ireland during the last twenty years, particularly that which took place in 1782, and was whimsically enough called "final adjustment," have convinced me of that necessity. When it was found proper to take off the shackles from the Irish parliament, and highly proper it was, a union should have been proposed, and by the same measure only should all the commercial and other advantages have been communicated, which were so indiscriminately conceded without terms since 1778. It would have been still better, if a union had taken place in the beginning of the century, and that the constitution and commerce of Great Britain, which had been so long and so invidiously withheld, had been then communicated to Ireland. But in 1782, the administration of that day, without supplying any means of keeping these kingdoms together, rashly gave away the dependence of the two islands on each other; and now there is no certainty in the connexion of Great Britain and Ireland. Independence of legislature seems to have suggested notions of separation, which appeared, in some degree, as early as 1784. However, even those who attempt to justify what was done in 1782, must acknowledge, that there were points of essential consequence left unsettled, and that it should not have been postponed to the hour of difficulty and distress to arrange and ascertain the relative exertions and political connexions of the two countries.

Much has been said on the words "final adjustment:" but that which is so called, only referred to the then asserted independence of parliament, and by no means

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precluded union: on the contrary, it is clear it was the opinion at the time, that farther measures were necessary to establish a connexion on a solid and permanent basis: and so far as I understand what was intended, I consider that adjustment as putting the Irish parliament on the footing of independence and free deliberation, and in that situation alone which could satisfy the people of Ireland, that the acts of their parliament would be thenceforward free and uncontrolled; but at any rate it is trifling to suppose, that nothing more was to be attempted, if that which had been done had not the effect of preserving the connexion and attachment of the two countries. It is true that union became more necessary as well as more difficult, in consequence of what was done in 1782, and also in 1793, when the principle of our navigation and colonial laws were, without terms or occasion, sacrificed by the act which permits goods and commodities of the growth, production, or manufacture, of Asia, Africa, or America, to be imported from Ireland into Great Britain. All these benefits should have been reserved as the means of union, but being then unconditionally granted, they have rendered that measure much less sought for by Ireland; and I confess that the strongest objection I felt to the propositions of 1785 (which by no means would have done what it is necessary to do), arose from the apprehension, that if carried, they might prevent a union. It was obvious, that if all the reserved advantages of Great Britain were to be given up, there would be no means of future negotiation remaining.—Previously to that period, Ireland would have petitioned for a union, and I think she might well do so now as the greatest possible acquisition she could make; but neither the adjustment in question, nor all the commercial concessions, nor other means employed to tranquillize that country, have had the least effect. The bad state of Ireland yearly became worse. It appears the parties are not to be satisfied; that no amelioration of the condition of Ireland has taken place; that a great proportion of the people is now as ill-disposed to government, as bigoted, as ignorant, and as uncivilized as they were at the time of the massacre in 1641. At present the permanency of the connexion of Great Britain with Ireland depends on the parties which exist, and ever must exist, in a nation of Protestants and Roman Catholics so peculiarly interested against, and politically hostile to, each other. These divisions are the bane of the country, never to be annihilated but by a legislative union. The whole present system is bad. The change of government at least every four years, and the concessions so regularly made under the vain notion of satisfying the people, create and promote schemes and suggestions inconsistent with the tranquillity of the country, and encourage agitators, whose uniform object it is, to disturb the public mind.

I have observed, that independence of parliament suggested the idea of separation. Irrational notions of independence, leading to dissolution of government, must end in civil war and the introduction of the French. Manufactures and agriculture would then cease much more suddenly than they could possibly revive; and whatever might be the event, Ireland would be completely ruined, and England greatly distressed. But supposing the crisis in question should not immediately come on, Ireland would continue in its present disturbed state, and England would ever find Ireland the back door to conspiracy, rebellion and invasion. And so miserably distracted is Ireland at present, that among three millions of Roman Catholics, and half a million of Dissenters, there is scarcely a man capable of a political idea, who does not wish for something different from that which is; namely, a change in the church establishment, the abolition of tythes, a parliamentary reform, or a republic: nor are the members of the established church entirely free from the same unhappy temper of mind. The common enemies of mankind will not fail to take advantage of this state of things: they have raised it into a dangerous and formidable conspiracy, and it seems the only means through which they can hope of succeeding in their favourite plan of destroying the British empire. Nothing can be more dangerous than a notion, that a coalition of churchmen, dissenters, and Catholics, for the purpose of separation, cannot take place. The report of the Lords and Commons of Ireland, and what has happened lately, completely prove, that such a coalition is not merely possible, but that it actually exists, and that the foundations of it are laid, and deeply laid, already. This subject has been so fully and so ably discussed, that it is not necessary to state how general, how great, and how irreme-

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diable by common means, are the mischief and danger: the unexampled perilous state of Ireland is well known: it was therefore evidently the duty of ministers to bring forward some measure to prevent even the possibility of so great a calamity as the separation of the two countries. It seems also highly incumbent on the British parliament to take early the most effectual steps to promote the proper remedy: and every thing has been tried, except that which is now obviously the best and only means, a union. Every concession has been made; many colonial and commercial advantages, have been communicated to her: in short, every thing has been granted so far, that we are now told by the enemies of union, that Ireland does not desire greater freedom and extension of trade than she at present possesses, preferring her independence and dignity as a nation. They surely have odd notions of independence and dignity who prefer holding almost the whole of their trade, almost their existence, at the discretion of another country, rather than by right as a part of that country. But I should not do justice if I did not acknowledge this way of thinking is by no means general, and that the two largest counties Cork and Galway, and the city of Cork, county of Clare, and other districts of Ireland, had expressed the contrary, and so well, that I wish to make use of their own words [Here the noble lord read the said addresses]. These addresses are most respectably signed; and there is reason to believe, that the sentiments therein expressed are much more general in the several counties which have not addressed than has been supposed.

Although Ireland has acquired much which should only have been conceded by union, it is not true that she cannot obtain farther commercial advantages by that measure. The best market, that of Great Britain for all Irish manufactures, is still reserved, except linens, and her linens are become one of the greatest manufactures in the world, entirely in consequence of having that market, and could never have been carried on to its present great extent, unless aided by the prompt payment of Great Britain, which in a great degree acts as a supply of capital. Six parts in seven of the whole exports of linen from Ireland are imported into Great Britain, and of the seventh part the greatest proportion goes to America, including the West Indies. On an average of four years, ending the 25th of March 1798, were exported from Ireland 39,885,776 yards; of which to Great Britain 38,695,659: to the British colonies in America and islands in the West Indies, 1,285,998; to the states of America 4,012,519; to foreign parts of Europe and to Africa, 891,530; being about a forty fourth part of the whole export of linens from Ireland. Linens are the only Irish manufacture, properly so called, which has the advantage of the British market, and it has flourished accordingly. No manufacture, no trade of Ireland, except such as are duty free, or have particular advantages in the British market, have succeeded. Linens, corn, and the produce of cattle, which alone have those advantages, amount on an average of the last three years to 5,410,825*l.* when the total value of all Irish imports into Great Britain were 5,612,689*l.* of which there were articles not the manufacture and produce of Ireland to the amount of 101,864*l.* So that the articles of Irish growth or manufacture, which are not duty free, or have no particular exemption or advantage in British ports, amount only to 100,781*l.* and form a small proportion, indeed, of the great importation from Ireland into Great Britain, alone amounting to 5,612,689*l.* which stated in the manner most favourable to Ireland, is, at least, six parts in seven of the whole export trade of Ireland to all parts.

We cannot be surprised, that woollen and other manufactures have decreased in Ireland during the late turbulent state of that country. We may rather wonder, that they have not been more affected; but such articles as have the peculiar advantage of the British market, have even lately increased. The manufactures and commerce of Ireland are now, and have always been, greatly inferior to what they may be; it is reasonable therefore to suppose, that when the present prohibitory duties which were laid on manufactures coming from all parts to protect those of England, are, in respect to Irish manufactures, equalized, as intended by the articles of union, and they shall have the advantage of the British market the same as linens, the produce of cattle and corn, they may also flourish. No country is better circumstanced for manufactures than Ireland. She has plenty of water and fuel, the first requisites in manufactures. The encouragement to her indus-

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try will be great, especially as it will be impossible to countervail the difference of price of labour and of excises in the two countries, and commercial men will acknowledge the superior advantage of a near market, and a quick return, so absolutely necessary to a country wanting capital. If union should take place, there will be no jealousy, no warfare of bounties and drawbacks, no invidious wish to check the prosperity of Ireland, or any manufacture there, and the great commercial advantages of Ireland will no longer be held at the pleasure of another country. The prosperity of Ireland, such as it is, in no degree arose from the independency of the Irish parliament, but from commercial advantages derived from Great Britain. I hesitated when I first heard that a contrary opinion came from a man as able, as respectable, and, at least, as well informed, as any in the two islands; but the assertion that the prosperity of Ireland arose from the independence of her parliament, appears to me so entirely unsupported by fact, that I scarcely know how to reason about it, except by asking, whether the increase of the linen manufacture; whether the prosperity of the beef, pork, and butter trade; whether the growth of a grain of corn, or of a blade of grass; whether the opening of the ports of Great Britain to Irish corn at a lower price than from other countries, have been effected by the independence of the Irish parliament. In short, which article of growth or export has increased in consequence of it? Have the laws been better executed? Has the country been more tranquil? Are life and property more safe? In truth, I can trace little to that event but the present disturbed state of Ireland. I repeat, that the prosperity of Ireland entirely depends on the connexion with and advantages derived from Great Britain, without which her trade would be almost nothing: and this appears so perfectly evident, that I consider it not to be necessary to add a syllable more to prove it. When Ireland has acquired the British constitution, a due execution of laws and tranquillity, and that life and property are secure there; a much greater intercourse of English capital will undoubtedly be employed in Ireland, and then her prosperity will be real and permanent. At present no prudent man will lend one shilling to that country in any shape, far less will a commercial or manufacturing man risk his capital in any speculation, where a spirit of unfriendly independence, of separation and of rebellion, so strongly prevails; but surely it is not commercial advantage and wealth only, that are wanting to Ireland. She is deficient in the most essential of all things, good order and well executed laws. Life and property are not more secure there, than among the most disturbed people upon earth. A residence there is as much to be avoided as in countries subject to the most hideous tyranny or savage banditti.

The apprehensions expressed, especially at this time, that the number of absentees will be greatly increased by a union, are somewhat extraordinary. There are now infinitely a greater number of emigrants, for the sake of personal safety than will be occasioned if union should be adopted. If that measure should take place, few families will follow those who are called to parliament: if they make the experiment, the difference of expense will soon check the evil: and those that occasionally become absentees, will be so by choice not by compulsion. It will not be improper in this place to state with the view of removing wrong impressions, that the number and property of absentees have been always greatly exaggerated, and also the bad effects of the consequent drain of money. Those who are most capable of examining the question agree, that the remittance to regular absentees is below 600,000*l*., I believe considerably, which is not more than one-fifth of the value of the exports of linens alone to this country, amounting to at least three millions.—I am little disposed to argue in favour of non-residence, yet I must observe, that those parts of Ireland as well as of England, where manufactures flourish, are remarkable for the non-residence of land-proprietors. But, in general, I consider their absence as the greatest misfortune, and I conceive one of the most essential advantages of England over Ireland arises from the residence of that class of men, and from their great attention to the people, and to all the details of the country round them. To another circumstance, very different from the custom of England, and full as much as the residence of landowners, is the unimproved state of Ireland to be attributed. The intermediate man, a person between the owner and occupier, who holds land from the resident as well

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as from the absentee, has no permanent interest in the improvement of it. His income depends on the exaction of the utmost rent that can be got for a limited time from an under-tenant, who often recommends himself by offering an higher rent in proportion to his inability to improve the land, and as a premium for the risk of accepting a doubtful tenant, whose small capital is sometimes still more reduced by his being required to advance the rent. But we cannot be surprised, that men of fortune in Ireland should now reside in villas near the metropolis, or absent themselves, when we recollect the uncivilized state of the country. At present it cannot be expected from them, nor is it safe; and unless some great change should happen which will induce and enable men of fortune to live there, and to instruct, protect, and encourage the people, civilization will go on very slowly.

All the same objections which are urged in Ireland against a union were made by Scotland at the time of her union with England, and every mischief was predicted, but they all proved unfounded. Arguments, which came from some of the ablest men of those times, and which then appeared almost conclusive, are completely refuted by experience. It was said, that Edinburgh would be deserted and ruined: the same is now said of Dublin: but since the union, the size of Edinburgh, and the number of her inhabitants, have been more than doubled, and the city beautified in a high degree. All Scotland is greatly improved, her population increased; she is ten times more rich since that period: her people are civilized, the laws are now executed, life and property are secure; the legislatures of the two kingdoms no longer at variance as heretofore, and at the risk of rupture each counteracting the other. Few families of property are now constantly absentees, and almost without exception, those Scotchmen who go from home, and acquire a fortune, in the end carry it to Scotland. Before the union, Scotland had scarcely any thing worthy the name of a manufacture: all her efforts to obtain a foreign or colonial trade had failed; but now her manufactures and trade are as great in proportion as those of England. And all these advantages are greatly beyond the progressive improvement which would have taken place without a union, and without which many of them never could have taken place.

The alarm in the city of Dublin on the subject of union is said to be greater and more just than elsewhere; but I am satisfied that her apprehensions are unfounded. The absence of eighty commoners and thirty lords certainly cannot ruin Dublin. The lord lieutenant, the principal officers of every kind, the courts of justice will still remain. She will still continue the winter residence of the principal people of fortune, as Edinburgh does. She will be the seat of education, of amusement, and of the arts. Her trade will increase greatly. The complete intercourse and exchange of commodities which will be established by a union, will raise her commerce beyond what the most sanguine man has ever yet imagined. Cork, Waterford, and Limerick, will have a great proportion of the provision and other trade; but Dublin will be the mart for the import and export, particularly of manufactures. Dublin will have the great trade to the most thriving port, perhaps, in the world—I mean Liverpool. The trade of Ireland with England will be carried on with more security, especially in time of war, between those ports. Every article of foreign and British manufacture and produce which Ireland does not furnish or import immediately from the place of growth or of manufacture, she may have from thence. Almost all the widely-extended inland navigation of England points to Liverpool, and may supply what is wanted to advantage. As Ireland imports but a small proportion of her consumption of West India articles directly from the place of growth, Dublin is well situated for supplies of those articles from Bristol and Liverpool in return for her exports to those places. The corn trade will become a prodigious article, if the produce of the two islands should by a union be put on the same footing as between two counties in England. The great inland navigations of Ireland will convey corn at a cheaper rate to Dublin, even from Limerick and Connaught, much cheaper than by a circuitous and precarious sea voyage. The canal tolls on corn and flour should, in favour of Dublin, be purchased at the public expense, or greatly reduced; and the same should be done in respect to the docks in the port of Dublin. This would facilitate the intercourse between the two countries, and be an advantage to them

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both; and would ultimately benefit Dublin much more than the residence of those who would be sent to the united parliament. Dublin would become the warehouse of the corn of Ireland for the steady and certain corn markets of the north-west of Great Britain and the north of Ireland, where a very small part of the consumption of the inhabitants can possibly be grown. The English farmer may at first be alarmed when he hears that Ireland will be considered as a part of England in respect to the corn-trade; but the advantages will be reciprocal, and the effect which some may apprehend from an influx of corn more than sufficient cannot take place. Unfortunately, we constantly import as much oats as Ireland can spare at any time, at present double the quantity, and that evil is increasing rather than decreasing. She is well situated to furnish those parts of Great Britain, which will always require a supply of that kind of corn, and the quantity of wheat she is ever likely to spare will not be sufficient to overload the British markets. It will be much less mischievous to the growers of wheat in England, to have the ports constantly open to the limited quantity that can come from Ireland, than to have them open to a glut of corn from all parts of the world for three months certain; the moment the smallest proportion of the consumption of this country is wanting, the moment its price becomes what is by no means extravagant, but on the contrary, while it is moderate, considering the increased expense of tillage. The opening of our ports for three months certain to all the world, when we only want a moderate quantity, may reduce the price of wheat ruinously low; but the comparatively small quantity that could come from Ireland, would have no farther effect than supplying what may be actually wanted. When Ireland has a constantly open market in Great Britain for corn, it will prove the greatest encouragement to her farmers to change their slovenly management. At present their corn is exported in so bad a state, that it must meet the corn of other countries at market to great disadvantage. When they have a steady market, they will soon find the necessity of preparing and dressing their corn in a manner that will enable it to bear a competition with the corn of England.

It has been suggested, that the manufactures of Ireland, and particularly the linen trade, would suffer through the want of a resident parliament. The principal manufactures and commerce of Scotland are situated at a greater distance from London than those of Ireland, and they became what they are since the union of the parliament; yet there has never been the slightest complaint in respect to necessary protection and assistance from the British parliament: and perhaps it may not improperly be observed in this place, that no disadvantage whatever has arisen to the affairs of Scotland in consequence of her having only 45 members in the British parliament; the attention to them has been as complete, and they have been as well managed as those of England by 513 members, and the government of Scotland has been administered since the union as vigilantly and more impartially than before, and the same, in all probability, will be the case in respect to Ireland.

The objection to union on the part of the Protestants of Ireland is most unaccountable: they can hardly be said to constitute a nation; they are an English colony governing upwards of three millions of Roman Catholics, or, at least, six times their own number, in a country acquired and maintained by English arms and treasure; which colony never could have supported itself, and even the last summer would have been overwhelmed, unless protected by the same means, by English power. Many of them, I am sure, are sensible, that such is their situation, and that their consequence and security depend on the connexion with the mother country. In respect to the Roman Catholics, union alone can make it safe to satisfy their claims By union, all that enmity, jealousy, and contrariety of interest, which naturally arise between those two unequal bodies, must soon cease. The Protestants will lose nothing; I am satisfied their object was not monopoly but safety: they will be safe, and relieved from all apprehensions, and may have a better tenantry, and more attached to their interest. The Roman Catholics may acquire all they can desire; and I hope we shall never again hear of Protestant ascendancy or Catholic emancipation, words which have been very insidiously employed to the worst purposes. On cool reflexion it will appear, that Ireland will not incur any disadvantage, but the advantages to be gained by her are the greatest that can be conceived, and in the

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first place, security and tranquillity, as it is reasonable to suppose, that an identity of constitution and a due execution of the laws, will produce the same effects in Ireland as they have done in Great Britain, and particularly in Scotland within this century. Till union takes place, and not till then, will the theoretical independence of Ireland become practical. Ireland, in truth, is now actually dependent on England through her divisions, through her trade, and through her constitution. Either the Protestants or the Catholics will depend on English support. It has been shown, that the trade of Ireland is absolutely dependent on that of England; and the king of Great Britain being subject to British laws, in obeying him, and under the necessary control of his ministers, Ireland must in some sort be dependent: but supposing two perfectly independent legislatures within the same empire, they must always be considered as in an uncertain and perilous state, mutually inconvenient to each other, and always cherishing discontent and jealousy. If one parliament exerts powers in opposition to those of the other, what must be the consequences? They are so obvious, that it would be an abuse of time to state them. We cannot reflect with much satisfaction on the only two instances which have occurred since the independence of the Irish legislature, wherein the two parliaments could act oppositely to each other. The rejection of the commercial propositions in 1785, on the part of Ireland has not obtained the applause, even in that country, of the well-informed, and the conduct which was held on the occasion of appointing a regency evinced a disposition to risk the mischiefs which might be expected to arise from the clashing of two independent parliaments. In short, if the sort of independence which is claimed has any meaning, it leads to separation: union or separation must assuredly take place; for it seems agreed on all sides, that the countries cannot go on as they are.—Soon after the accession of James the first to the thrones of these kingdoms, sir Francis Bacon strongly recommended a union between England and Scotland. He clearly saw how faulty and precarious the fortunate junction of the two countries would be, if only supported by the circumstance of having the same king. He proposed a complete union. He recommends highly the liberal system of the Romans, observing, that their naturalization were, in effect, perpetual mixtures, not only with persons, but with cities and countries; and adds, that there never were any states that were good commixtures but the Romans. He also observes, that the conduct of other kingdoms has been different, and consequently the addition of farther empire and territory has been rather matter of burthen than of strength, and kept alive the seeds of revolt and rebellion for many ages. And he adds, that Arragon was united to Castile by a marriage; but after 100 years, a civil war commenced in consequence of the bad policy of not incorporating, but leaving it a separate government; and if he had lived as late as these times, he might have stated much stronger cases. Machiavel also attributes the growth of the Roman empire to the good policy in incorporating so easily with strangers; and Molyneux, the strenuous asserter of the independence of the Irish parliament, says, a union on equal terms would be highly advantageous to Ireland, and the best means of enjoying that independence: and the Irish parliament, in the beginning of this century, expressed a desire for an entire union. But the times were not so enlightened as they now are, and a narrow policy prevented the participation of those liberal, fair, and equal terms which will be now offered to Ireland. The present chief baron of Ireland, one of the first constitutional authorities of that kingdom, and a successful supporter of Irish independence in 1782, has asserted, that the independence of the Irish parliament was most valuable, because it would enable Ireland to treat for a union upon fair terms.

The union of Wales and Scotland with England, the union of Bretagne, Dauphiny, and other provinces with France, the union of the several kingdoms of Spain, all of which, while independent, were greatly prejudicial to each other, proved highly advantageous to the different countries and to the empires, in proportion to the completeness of legislative union that took place; and the sensible Americans soon discovered how dangerous their situation would be, if they remained separate independent states. Every advantage that was expected, and more than was expected, has been derived from the union of Scotland. No country was ever more disturbed before and at the time. Nothing could tend more directly

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to separation than the act of security which passed in the parliament of Scotland just before that event: a great proportion of the people of all ranks were as ill-disposed towards England as the worst-disposed of the Irish. The clans were as much out of the reach of the law as any part of Ireland can be supposed to be. To carry fire and sword from one district into another, was as much the disposition of the highlanders, as it has been lately of white-boys and defenders in Ireland. The taste and fashion of the people were to be in a situation to commit hostilities, and the chief men of the country, instead of endeavouring to excite the industry of their dependents, only valued themselves in proportion to the number of those who were disposed to follow them in arms. Notwithstanding the crowns of the two kingdoms had been annexed above 100 years, a connexion with France was still kept up, and the most dangerous intrigues carried on.

Nature has given many local advantages to Ireland. Union will give her a constitution that is deemed the best; will give her tranquillity, wealth, and character; and money will be lent in Ireland, when settled, with as much confidence as in England. Those who are now absentees would find the advantage of residing there. Englishmen would risk their persons and property in that country, which, if not immediately, will in time, become as civilized as Great Britain. Union is most necessary, and will be most beneficial to Ireland. The plan seems formed for her peculiar advantage. Yet it by no means follows, that the great advantage of union to Ireland will be counterbalanced by disadvantages to Great Britain, or that the gain of Ireland will be the loss of Great Britain. In a long course of years, even if the measure of union should not take place, manufactures and trade will decline in some places when they redouble from various circumstances in others; but possible local disadvantages must not prevent the legislature from looking to the general good. It must be admitted, the prosperity of Ireland would be the prosperity of Great Britain. The inefficient state of a part is a great loss to the whole.

The unsettled state of that country is a general drawback from the prosperity of the empire, every part of which will find the advantage of that high degree of improvement which the assimilation of the two countries would effect. Perhaps no circumstance in the character of the commercial and manufacturing interests, and of the people in general in Great Britain, gives a greater proof of their liberality and good sense, than their acquiescence on this occasion in some possible sacrifice of manufactures, of commerce, and of constitution, for the sake of unity and tranquillity of empire. The energies of commerce surpass, and sometimes contradict, the most plausible calculations: and even in a commercial light England might be benefited by a great increase of manufactures and commerce in Ireland, inasmuch as Ireland will be better enabled to pay for the many articles she will continue to take from England. We all know that much commercial advantage cannot be obtained by trading with a nation which is not rich, especially when the produce of the two countries is the same. The interchange of commodities will animate trade; and no intelligent man will say, that the manufactures of England have decreased in consequence of the great increase of manufactures in Scotland. But those who will give themselves the trouble of examining the question will find, that the two countries are mutually benefited by the prosperous state of their respective manufactures and commerce, and that competition encourages skill and industry, and promotes and enforces good regulations, and consequent cheapness of manufacture. In respect to revenue, the empire will be highly benefited; for with the increase of wealth, there will be as great increase in the excise and customs; and when we enumerate the commercial and other advantages that would be derived from a union, we should not forget the mischiefs that would be avoided, and that the final termination of the ancient alliances, the connexion, and the intrigues of France with Scotland, and all projects of separation, were at last effected by the union of Great Britain.

In respect to the incompetence of parliament, it is difficult to believe that that objection is at this time seriously urged; if it is, it only convinces me there is great want of argument against the measure of union. The argument would throw us back to first principles; that is, the dissolution of government, and to that jargon which has nearly ruined Europe. This doctrine was ably refuted at the time of the union with Scotland; if it had not, it would ill suit the pretensions of Ireland to establish it. If I should be asked,

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whether I am satisfied that union will produce order and steady prosperity in Ireland? I should answer, that I am. The same violence and machinations which exist at present to effect separation might possibly be attempted at first; but when Ireland is irrevocably become a part of Great Britain, there would gradually and soon be an end of speculations and conspiracies. France would no longer speculate on distinct governments and interests. The enemies of order would not be tempted by any prospect of success: they would recollect, that it is not Ireland alone, but the three kingdoms, that must be induced to sacrifice or yield their constitution; and, as was the case in Scotland, when the people of that country, who had been so averse to union, had tasted the sweets of that measure, they became the most strenuous supporters of it; insomuch, that when it was the object to raise a rebellion there, it was found that a declaration against union would be unpopular and hurt the cause. It may appear extraordinary, that so much should be said in this House to prove the advantage of union to Ireland; but the arguments are not so misapplied as they may seem to be; they are, in truth, arguments to recommend the laying a proposition before the Irish nation so beneficial, that I cannot doubt but a people of great abilities and capable of discernment, will, when the heat of their alarm has subsided, no longer refuse to take into consideration a plan which may be highly advantageous to every part of the empire; and unless the measure had been ill understood, the unreasonable refusal to listen to any proposition, could not have taken place.

In voting for the resolutions, I do not mean to approve more than the principle of union, to which no adequate objection has been stated. If we should hereafter proceed to details, it will be then necessary to give all our attention, and exert our best powers in examining the articles; and above all, in preventing harm to the constitution; taking care that we do not, with a levity and submission that seem to belong to the times, do any thing that may be unnecessary for one country, and should be highly dreaded by the other. There has now been an opportunity of some experience, which it is to be hoped will promote the utmost liberality and candour in proposing the measure, whenever the people of Ireland are found to be disposed to accept it. Every man will agree with me in deprecating all idea of force or threats, or the use of any means that are not perfectly fair and honourable. To render union satisfactory and permanent, it will not be sufficient that it be merely acceded to by parliament. The people at large must be reconciled to it; and that they may, is the wish nearest my heart. It is for Ireland that I am most interested on this occasion. Her deplorable condition demands it; for I am most seriously convinced the measure is absolutely necessary for her tranquillity, security, and welfare. The bad effects of two separate parliaments within one empire, and the baneful idea of separation, can be done away only by a union; and until that event takes place, Ireland will never be settled, will always be disturbed by the most mischievous speculations and intrigues, the sport of parties, and of the enemies of England; she will be a weakness as she is at present, instead of a strength to the empire.

Sir *Francis Burdett* said, that he would confine himself to that particular view of the subject which he thought had not hitherto been taken, and which forcibly struck his mind as being that which was the most interesting. He agreed with the hon. gentleman who spoke last, in regard to the word union being a most comprehensive term, so comprehensive indeed, as to be equally applicable to the most opposite things—to a union accomplished by a conviction in the minds of the Irish people of its advantages—and to an union brought about by a mere hollow vote of a corrupt parliament, seconded by military power. It was material, then, to ascertain what was really intended by the term union; and on this matter he was afraid it was impossible for any man long to entertain doubts. A union of the first kind, which should conciliate the people, restore peace and liberty and justice to Ireland, would, in his mind, be inconsistent with the whole system which had been recently acted upon, and which had produced such disgraceful horrors in the sister kingdom. He thought the right hon. the chancellor of the exchequer totally incapable of conciliating the people of Ireland, and he was also the most unfit man to attempt it, because he could not, without a dereliction of principle, remove the men who had made themselves the most obnoxious to Ireland. He thought, therefore, that if the House and the country regarded an union as necessary

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to the happiness and security of the empire, they should look out for some other person to effect it; for the present minister had it not in his power. There was a man whom disgust had driven from our councils, who did possess every advantage in a striking and singular manner; whose temper and disposition was peculiarly adapted to mitigate hatred and conciliate affection, and who did possess the incalculable advantage in the eyes of the Irish people, of having exerted all his splendid talents to put a stop to the horible system of torture pursued in Ireland. He might possibly be able to speak the words of peace with effect to distracted Ireland, and she might be induced perhaps to give an attentive ear to his well known and friendly voice. He might be able to pour the balm of comfort into her afflicted bosom, and with his gentle hand to heal her bitter rankling wounds; but for the right hon. gentleman to attempt it, would only serve, instead of healing to irritate and inflame; a brave and generous people had, perhaps, rather endure their present sufferings, or worse, if worse could be, than receive any mitigation as a boon at the hand of a man, who had insulted them beyond the power of forgiveness, and injured them beyond the power of reparation. Therefore, on every account, he thought the present minister ill qualified for bringing such a measure to a happy conclusion. He agreed with the right hon. member who opened this debate, in paying no great regard to what was styled the independence of the Irish parliament. He thought, undoubtedly, that that parliament must act in obedience to the measures of his majesty's advisers in this country; hitherto this measure had been considered only as it affected Ireland; but in his opinion, it was infinitely more important as it affected this country. He must confess that were he an Irishman, he should be perfectly indifferent as to this or any measure which should be adopted; certain that Ireland could never be in a more unhappy condition, or under a more dreadful system of government than now. Ireland had nothing now to lose. But bad as the times were, we were not quite arrived at that point in this country; we still possessed some small remains of our former liberty, and had not altogether yet lost sight of reform; but when this measure should have been carried into effect—when a hundred Irish members should have been introduced into this House, accompanied with that other part of the policy of converting the militia into a standing army—of sending the militia of this country to protect Ireland, as we should, no doubt, be told, its liberty, peace and happiness—and the militia of Ireland sent over to England to protect our liberty, our peace and our happiness, then indeed all hope of reform, all hope of redress would vanish, and the two countries, even in spite of themselves, be forced mutually to oppress one another. Believing that such would be the effects of the measure in contemplation, he should undoubtedly give it his opposition.

Mr. *Buxton* said, that his object in rising was, to animadvert in a few words upon the unprovoked manner in which the hon. baronet had arraigned the conduct of administration. To that administration it was but bare justice to say, that in conducting the measure of the union, it was impossible to have acted with more justice, more temper, more openness or in a manner in every respect more conciliatory. The resolutions and the address now proposed, would stand recorded to the eternal honour of the legislature that proposed them. As to the other charge, that the calamities which had fallen upon Ireland, were imputable to the chancellor of the exchequer, he trusted that the hon. baronet was the only man in the country, who was capable of advancing such a charge. To the pestilential societies, of the existence of which the hon. baronet could not be ignorant, all these mischiefs could alone be ascribed. Were it not for the vigilance of the right hon. gentleman, those societies might have worked all the evil and mischief which they had long been meditating. To him the country owed its salvation; for his wisdom had devised, and his activity adopted measures which had frustrated the black machinations of those societies. As to the measures of a union, it was his firm opinion, that unless it was adopted, Ireland must become a province of France.

Mr. *I. H. Browne* said, he would cheerfully vote for the address, wishing, as he sincerely did, to grant to Ireland a full participation of all British privileges and advantages.

General *Fitzpatrick* said, that the precise question now was, whether the House was to agree to this stage of the proceeding, which was, to lay the result of their deliberations at the foot of the throne. As it was professed that no step

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was to be taken in the matter till the Irish parliament showed a disposition to acquiesce in it, he thought it was unnecessary to do so. The grounds of the measure was already before the public, and so far that object was attained. Besides it might be attended with fatal divisions between the two countries, to make an appeal, as the address would do, to the crown upon the actual difference between the two legislatures. It was a delicate thing to call upon the king to decide in such a situation. With respect to the chief bond between the two countries at present, he thought erroneous opinions were entertained. It was not the crown merely, but the power of stopping Irish acts of parliament in this country which constituted the great bond. This he and many others had thought sufficient in 1782, when it was established, and that arrangement he still thought sufficient. He now begged leave to say a few words on the point, concerning which some difference had existed between him and the right hon. the chancellor of the exchequer. The papers which the right hon. gentleman had communicated to him on the subject had confirmed him in the statement he had made on a former occasion. It did appear indeed, from a secret and confidential letter of the duke of Portland, that, during his residence in Ireland, he had entertained some vague idea of some farther arrangement for consolidating the connexion between the two countries. This, however, must have been soon abandoned, as five days after the date of that letter, the noble duke had authorized him to say in the Irish House of Commons that no farther measure was in agitation. That no farther arrangement was in contemplation, appeared evident in the subsequent conduct of the duke, and his speech to the Irish parliament on its prorogation, the words of which were as decisive as words could be to express that the arrangement was final; a speech, too, which was delivered after the right hon. gentleman himself had come into the British cabinet. With respect to himself, it was now clear that he could never have seen the letter of the duke of Portland, to which the right hon. gentleman had alluded when the first conversation on the subject took place, and he was convinced that any floating idea of a future arrangement, which the duke might have entertained, must have very speedily been given up when found to be impracticable. The settlement of 1782 was considered as final; and when it was asked, whether it was considered final by its authors? that could only refer to it in a finished state, not while in agitation or incomplete.

Mr. *Canning* said, he should detain the House but a short time from hearing the explanation which they might probably expect from his right hon. friend (the chancellor of the exchequer) upon those points in dispute between him and the right hon. general, which had occupied the latter part of the right hon. general's speech. But there were other topics in the former part of that speech upon which he could not refrain from making a few observations, and he had the less scruple in obtruding himself upon the attention of the House for the short time which those observations might take up, as the difference between the right hon. general and his right hon. friend seemed to be now reduced almost to nothing. His right hon. friend had never contended that the right hon. general had been party to those farther measures which had been in the contemplation of the administration of the day, after what was called the final adjustment of 1782: he had only contended, that farther measures had, in fact been in contemplation. The right hon. general admitted, that the papers which had been submitted to his perusal did prove that the duke of Portland (the lord lieutenant under whom he served), and the English government had projected those farther measures; but he asserted at the same time, that he was not privy to their intentions. The truth of this assertion of the right hon. general no man could question, nor was it at all material. The right hon. general's admission that the duke of Portland and others had entertained such intentions, was sufficient to establish the point for which his right hon. friend had contended, that in their opinion at least, their adjustment of 1782 was not final in the sense which was now attempted to be fixed upon that term.

But the part of the right hon. general's speech upon which he was more particularly desirous of animadverting, was that in which he had endeavoured to dissuade the House from completing their work which they had now brought to a conclusion, by laying before his majesty, in the form of an address, the result of their long, patient, and accurate investigation of one of the most important subjects that

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ever were submitted to the deliberation of a legislative assembly. This proceeding the right hon. general had endeavoured to dissuade the House from adopting, on three grounds; first, on the ground of delicacy towards the sovereign himself; secondly, on that of delicacy towards the Irish parliament; and thirdly, on the broad ground of the mischiefs likely to be produced by the measure of union, if carried into execution.

First, as to delicacy to be observed towards the crown,—he could not forbear remarking, that it was at least a novel mode of showing respect, to refuse any answer whatever to a message of such solemnity and importance. His majesty had recommended to the consideration of the parliament of Great Britain and Ireland a measure which involved the dearest interests of the empire. He had required the advice of each parliament upon this measure, and undertaken, as the only channel of correspondence between the two, to communicate the decision of each to the other. And what was the conduct which the right hon. general prescribed to the parliament in England, in order to enable his majesty's crown to perform the pledge thus solemnly taken?—To preserve an obstinate silence, to return no answer, to offer no advice, to disregard altogether the appeal of their sovereign, and to force him into the necessity of avowing to his Irish parliament that he had nothing to communicate to them on the part of his parliament of England, that his parliament of England had treated his message with contempt!

The next reason for silence was the respect due to the parliament of Ireland, and to the decision (as it was termed) to which that parliament had already come upon the subject. How far any thing which had yet passed in Ireland could be considered as a decision against a union, he would not argue now. He should come to that point presently. It could not be denied, however, that the Irish House of Commons had done precisely that which the right hon. general would now fain persuade the House of Commons of England to do—refused to address the crown upon the subject at all. And this conduct (it was worthy of remark), when the right hon. general was endeavouring to persuade the British House of Commons to adopt it, he did not himself state as amounting to a rejection of the measure—when referring to it as what had been adopted by the parliament of Ireland, he stated it as equivalent to a complete rejection. There was surely some inconsistency in this. But, be that as it might, if the effect of this silence on the part of the Irish parliament was, that we in England were at this moment still disputing whether they had rejected the measure or no—what ground was there to induce the parliament of England to pursue a similar line of conduct, except it were for the express purpose of making it as difficult for Ireland to understand what was meant here, as it was found impossible here to agree about the intentions of Ireland? If in all treaties and negotiations it was necessary that one party should speak out first; it seemed reasonable, it certainly was most handsome and liberal, that the party superior in power and strength, and that which had a benefit to confer, should begin, rather than the weaker party, which was to receive the obligation. There appeared, therefore, to be no disrespect to the parliament of Ireland in stating our opinion openly, although we were not in possession of theirs. Nor could he have thought that there would have been any thing disrespectful or injurious to Ireland in the manner of opening the discussion of the subject, even if the fact had been, as the hon. general seemed to suppose (but with a strange forgetfulness of the real state of the business), that the English parliament had been called upon to consider of the proposal of a union, before the same question had been submitted to the parliament of Ireland. The fact, however, as all the world knew, was not so: the message was sent with a precision, perhaps, more scrupulous than necessary, on the same day to the parliaments of both countries; both proceeded on the same day to the discussion; and it certainly could not be represented as the effect of any extraordinary haste and precipitancy, of any determined hostility to investigation and fair discussion, that on the part of the British parliament it was first ready to lay at the foot of the throne the expression of its deliberate sentiments upon the measure recommended to its consideration.

Next, as to the mischiefs which the right hon. general predicted as likely to arise from pressing the union upon the acceptance or even upon the consideration of the Irish parliament and the Irish people. The first evil, it seemed, was that which had been so often stated, and so

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often answered, the danger of shaking the confidence and irritating the feelings of the Irish, by trenching upon that sacred compact which they had been taught to consider as eternally indissoluble and unalterable, the final adjustment of 1782. This was a subject upon which it could hardly be necessary to say much, after the admission of the right hon. general that night, as to what were the views entertained after the completion of that settlement by the very persons who had the greatest share in completing it:—it was a subject upon which, after the repeated discussions which it had undergone, it certainly was not easy to say any thing new. But surely it was not too much to assume, that the settlement of 1782, however perfect with respect to the objects to which it was applied, could not in an equal degree comprehend and adjust things which were wholly out of its scope and operation;—that if it was final, as concluding all the differences and discussions which it was intended to conclude, it could not be final to the extent of precluding all future discussion and settlement of points not then in contemplation, of points which might and did arise out of the nature of that very measure itself;—that if, in short, it was a measure of the most ample, and comprehensive, and wise, and salutary nature, as far as it went, and for the purposes for which it was devised, it was not, however, the very *acme* of all human legislation, the *ne plus ultra* of political provision for all occasions past, present, and future, whether foreseen or unforeseen;—that if it had cured many and great then existing grievances, it could not, however, remedy those which did not exist at the time, when it was instituted, and much less those which had proceeded from its institution. There appeared, therefore, in his mind, no impediment in the adjustment of 1782, why the state of the connexion between Great Britain and Ireland as it now stood, and the actually existing dissentions and distractions of Ireland, might not be a matter of fair consideration for the parliaments of the two countries; and why such measures as were likely to heal those distractions, and to strengthen and maintain that connexion, might not be devised and adopted without scruple and without danger.

But then came the argument of the absurdity of pressing a measure here, which the voice of the parliament and people of Ireland had already loudly disapproved. In the first place, even supposing the disapprobation of the people of Ireland to be as general, and as rooted, as in partial instances it had undoubtedly been clamorous and violent; supposing even (which God forbid) that this measure, no less essential to the peace of Ireland than to the security of the empire, should not ultimately be accepted by the parliament of that country—still, he would ask, what disadvantage or what injury could arise from the parliament of Ireland being made to understand precisely what it was that they rejected, from their being called upon to decide, not upon the name, but upon the thing?—what injustice would it be to Ireland, if we determined, but in truth what a want of justice would it be to ourselves, if we did not determine—to record in a distinct and unquestionable shape not only the offer which we had made, but the principles and terms on which we made it? Evident as it must be, that such an explanation was essential to the success of the measure, it was no less evident that in case of its failure, our best consolation, our best justification in the eyes of Ireland and of the world, would be, to be found in such a record of the good intentions, of the liberality, and generosity of Great Britain.

But wherefore, after all, were we to despair of ultimate success? It was curious to observe, how strenuously it was recommended to us from the other side of the House to abandon at once the pursuit of this object as utterly hopeless; and to compare this recommendation with the language held by the same gentlemen in former instances, when our object was at least as hopeless, and our perseverance, God knows, at least as pertinacious. What was the language held by those gentlemen, and what was the conduct which they recommended to be pursued by government in the negotiations for peace? Did any of the humiliations and disappointments of those negotiations, did the haughty rejection of our proposals at Basle and Paris, abate a jot of their clamour for farther trial, or justify in their eyes the smallest relaxation on the part of ministers in their endeavours to procure a pacification? How loud and vehement were the charges of insincerity and duplicity against ministers, on any thing that could be construed into an appearance or suspicion of an intention on their part to acquiesce in the first or the second refusal of the enemy to treat? Did the cool

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contempt of Basle, did the kickings and buffetings of Paris, appear to those gentlemen to have sufficiently displayed the determined animosity of the enemy, or to have sufficiently proved the pacific disposition of this government? or did they not continually exhort to farther supplication? Did they not tell the government that they had not prayed earnestly enough, that they had not bowed low enough? "lower, lower, lower still," was their continued exhortation; "and in the end the Directory must be overcome by your intreaties; proceed till you have left no form of prostration untried; else we shall still deny, and the Directory will have a right to distrust, the sincerity of all that you have hitherto offered."

If, then, to extort a boon from an unwilling enemy, we were to proceed obstinately and steadily through every species of insult and indignity, were to brave all scorn, to take no denial, to press and urge our suit till we were absolutely spurned from the threshold on which we were kneeling;—why in God's name were we not to be so easily diverted from our endeavours to confer a benefit on a friend? —If in the one case we were taught to believe that by patience and perseverance we should, in the end, conquer the inflexible hostility of the Directory, and to console ourselves with the reflexion that if we failed, we should yet have established beyond question the proof of our sincerity, and recorded to the world the justice and moderation of our views—why were we in the other case to despair of conciliating those whose interests and happiness we had at heart? why were we to hesitate about committing our dignity for such an object? and why were we to hold as nothing in this case (even supposing a failure possible) the advantage of proving the sincerity and recording the justice of our intentions?

But this illustration might, perhaps, be pushed yet farther. What if, when the last negotiations were set on foot at Lisle, the proposal of peace with England had been recommended by the French Directory for the consideration of the two councils at Paris—that in one of them, the council of ancients perhaps, it had been approved by a great majority; in the other the council of five hundred, it had been, after a passionate, tumultuous debate, hastily rejected;—and if in this state of things ministers had come alone to the House, and declared that they found themselves under the necessity of breaking off the negotiation, and recalling our ambassador, for that, in truth, there was no hope of peace; was it not easy to imagine with what indignation such an intimation would have been received by the gentlemen who are now so easily daunted by the slightest appearance of opposition?—"What," (would they have said) break off now? recall your ambassador now?—when your proposals have been actually approved by two branches of the legislature at Paris, and rejected only, without fair discussion, by the third? Will you not wait till that Assembly shall have given the subject a more mature consideration? Can you believe that their refusal to entertain it is any thing else than a momentary passion, which will cool hereafter, and give place to sound deliberation? Have you not every encouragement you could expect at so early a period of the negotiation, before the novelty of the proposal is worn off, and while the precise terms of it are yet unknown! The executive power recommending peace—one of the councils adopting the recommendation.—Depend upon it there is no reason for despondency —Persevere, and your success is certain. There may be some clamour to silence, some prejudice to soften, some unfavourable, but not perhaps unfair nor unaccountable, jealousy to remove. But the business will make its way, wait only the event of full discussion." He would not state the parallel at length, because he would not appear to make a comparison that might be construed as disrespectful to the parliament of Ireland: but he could not, for his part, conceive on what principle that which would have been hailed as a presage of success in one case, should in the other be regarded as a certain omen of defeat.

Confident of the purity of the motives which dictated the proposal of the present measure, and convinced of its essential importance to the welfare, the salvation of Ireland; it was not a hasty word, an angry or suspicious refusal to consider the merits of the question, that could justify the parliament of this country in throwing up the plan, or abandoning the hopes of that success which a more mature consideration of the principles of the measure must ensure to it with the whole, and which it had already obtained with a part, of the legislature of the sister kingdom. Strong, however, as his conviction was of the advantages to be derived to

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Ireland from the union, and of the absolute necessity of such a measure for securing the connexion of that kingdom with Great Britain, he should be as averse as any man from pressing it upon the Irish parliament in any manner that should be injurious to its honour or independence. He would not now enter into a detail of the benefits to be expected from the union, nor into a description of the dangers which threatened to impair or to dissolve the connexion of the two countries, unless some efficient remedy were immediately applied to them. These points had already been fully discussed. He should content himself with replying to a few of the arguments respecting the independence of the Irish parliament, which was supposed to be violated by the bare proposal of the union, and which, in the right hon. general's apprehensions, would be absolutely done away by its accomplishment.

The attack upon the independence of the Irish parliament was stated to be the more unpardonable, as there was no settlement or security to be attained by a union, which could not be equally well provided by an arrangement between the two subsisting and separate parliaments, without trenching upon the free will and independence of either. This argument he had not only heard in that House, but he had read it lately in publications purporting to be copies of speeches delivered from high authority elsewhere, and he had particularly seen it developed in a pamphlet against the union (certainly one of the best-written on the side of the question which it espoused) by Mr. Jebb, a gentleman, as he understood, of much talents and respectability. But with this argument he was so far from agreeing, that he could almost be satisfied to rest the whole question on this point singly; and to give up the plan of union altogether, if it did not appear plain that there could be no mode of arrangement devised for the several possible differences and disagreements between the two kingdoms, short of union, which would not take away from the parliament of Ireland even the shadow of independence, and deprive it of all freedom and dignity in the points the most essential to its very being as a parliament.

What is the point, for instance, the most essential to the character of a House of Commons? what is the power and the function, without which it may indeed be a senate, it may be a grave and respectable council, it may be an assembly of representatives of the people, if you will, but it would cease to be a House of Commons according to the genuine spirit of the British constitution?—Is it not the power of the purse; the control preserved over the conduct of the executive ministers of the crown by the right of giving or withholding the supplies necessary for carrying on the business of the government? Let us see how the exercise of this characteristic and most important right would be secured to the Irish House of Commons, by a device which, it seems, is one of the main expedients proposed as a substitute for a union, a settled scale of proportional contribution. I confess (said Mr. Canning) I should like to see the first meeting of an Irish House of Commons, after this ingenious security for its independence had been provided, and to hear the explanation which must be given by some great patriot who might pique himself upon having invented so saving a substitute, to any country member of parliament who might very reasonably be at a loss to comprehend its operation. Suppose a message from the throne communicating a declaration of war, and supplies to be voted in consequence. The country gentleman, conscious of his duty as a member of the House of Commons, and proud of the additional means of discharging it, which he might presume himself to have acquired by the defeat of the union, and the consequent vindication of Irish independence, would very naturally propose to consider of the causes of the war, in order to judge of the propriety of granting supplies. He would be stopped, however, by the patriotic member, who would tell him, 'Sir, your independence does not allow this latitude. The parliament of Great Britain have already voted the supplies. We have nothing to do but to follow them.'—'Good (would the country gentleman answer), let us proceed then to consider the *quantum* of the supplies which we are to raise.'—'You may save yourself that trouble, Sir (would be the reply of the great patriot). In the act of last year, intitled "An Act for Vindicating the Independence of the Irish Parliament," you will find that we are bound by the vote of the British parliament, not only as to the general question of supplies, but as to the *quantum*. When England votes so much, Ireland is understood to have voted so

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much:—This was my substitute for the slavish dependence of a union. This is what we mean by proportional contribution!'—The country gentleman would, perhaps, be somewhat surprised at this explanation, and would inquire, rather anxiously, what function then it might be that he was come there to exercise. 'What! (says the patriot) why, since the establishment of our independence, our business is, to devise the means by which the money, already voted for us by the parliament of that country from whose domination we have so happily rescued ourselves, is to be raised.'—Is this, then, the notable contrivance by which the dignity and effective power of the parliament of Ireland are to be maintained? And is it for a victory over union purchased at this price, that the Irish parliament would crown with laurel the brows of the champions of its independence? And yet, Sir, I defy any man to point out to me any other meaning than that which I have ascribed to the phrase 'proportional contribution:' and I equally defy any man to show that there would be in the accomplishment of a union any thing a thousandth part so degrading and destructive to the importance and character and constitution of the House of Commons.

Look, Sir, at other essential rights and powers of a parliament, and see how they can be made to belong to a separate and unconnected parliament in Ireland, or how they can be effectually exercised by it. The right of impeachment, can that be exercised by the parliament of Ireland against the king's ministers in Great Britain? And yet does any body doubt that the king's British ministers are his proper and constitutional advisers in respect to the affairs of Ireland, as well as to those of the empire at large? The power of altering orlimiting the succession of the crown—the crown of Ireland as well as Great Britain—who shall deny that power to the parliament of Great Britain? To ascribe the same power to the parliament of Ireland would be treason. Where, therefore, do there exist, or where can there exist, that perfect equality and independence, which it is imagined the Irish parliament must resign the moment that it ceases to be distinct from that of Great Britain?

But if this be all that the Irish parliament is to keep and maintain by keeping its separate state, let us next see what it would lose by incorporation with the parliament of Great Britain. Let us see which of its powers or privileges would be abridged, what salutary and important function it would be disabled from exercising, when it shall be received into the bosom of this parliament, and make part of the general superintending legislature of the empire. To watch over the local and immediate interests of a country, and to preserve its interests, peace, and tranquillity, is one great duty of a parliament: another is, to guard and improve the civil and political rights of the people, and the laws and institutions on which they rest. For which of these functions will the Irish parliament be disqualified, when united with that of Great Britain? Will it be less qualified to adjust and to control the local feuds and animosities arising from religious differences in Ireland, when removed out of the reach of the immediate influence of every sudden and varying gust of popular frenzy? Instead of being committed as a party, it becomes an impartial judge of the conflict, when it is placed in a situation which enables it to weigh every claim with dispassionate calmness and dignity, to resist what may be extravagant without the appearance of enmity, and concede to the Catholics what may remain to be conceded without the appearance of intimidation, and without hazard to its own authority and power. If we consider the various other objects of legislation, in matters of commerce, of civil liberty, and of political constitution, will the people of Ireland feel their interests less safe, their rights and privileges less guarded, when those whose duty it is to watch over them shall sit among the guardians of the British constitution, and when no law shall be passed affecting the condition of an Irishman, which does not include in its operation millions of his fellow-subjects in Great Britain?

There is yet another province of a parliament, in which it acts not directly from itself, but by advice and control over the executive servants of the crown—the regulation of the concerns of a country in its relations with foreign countries whether at peace or war. In this province what will the parliament of Ireland lose by its incorporation with the parliament of this kingdom? What will it lose? is it not obvious that the question answers itself; that it can lose nothing; but that it will gain all?—Mark, then, the result of this examination of the powers and duties of a parliament. And if it be true that every

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attempt to secure the connexion of the two countries against the possibilities of difference between two separate parliaments is either utterly nugatory, or must reduce to a mere mockery in one of them the very independence which it is intended to preserve; if it be true, that by the incorporation of the two parliaments, while the empire in general is augmented in resources, in strength, and solidity, the parliament of Ireland gains additional power in all its functions, and, in some cases, acquires functions altogether new: if this be so, and if the connexion of the two countries be worth preserving, and if the dangers which threaten it be such, that an effort must be made for its preservation; can we hesitate to make that effort, while it is yet in our power? or shall we suffer ourselves to be driven from the only measure which promises to be adequate to the emergency, by the poor, unreasoning, unsupported paradox, that the separation of the legislatures alone can insure unity of will;—keep the parliaments distinct, and their interests and inclinations must be invariably the same; identify them, and you immediately create separate interests and discordant inclinations?

Though he should not detain the House by arguing what unfortunately was but too notorious to require argument or proof at this moment, the extent and nature of the calamities which had distracted and desolated Ireland, and which rendered some great effort absolutely indispensable to save that kingdom to itself and to the empire—he could not pass over wholly without notice the assertion of the hon. baronet, that his right hon. friend was to be considered as the sole and wilful author of all those calamities; that he alone had kindled the frightful and unnatural rebellion which had raged throughout that kingdom; he alone had armed the frenzied populace against the government, against the laws, against civil order, and the rights of humanity; and all for the express purpose of getting Ireland more completely into his power: and that with this view he now brought forward the Union, the pretended cure for the evils which he had himself created. This charge was as extraordinary in itself as it was curious from the reasoning by which it was supported. As to the fact, to whom the rebellion was to be attributed, he should have no great difficulty in setting the hon. baronet right: but the House, he could plainly see, anticipated him in all that he could say upon that subject. But let the House observe how the accusation stood against his right hon. friend;—and how the gentlemen on the opposite side of the House, in their laudable anxiety to heap upon his right hon. friend every crime, and to impute to him every ill motive of which human nature was capable, did at length so contradict and perplex their own arguments, that to prove him guilty of all that was ascribed to him, they must prove him to be wanting not in common humanity only and common honesty, but in common sense; a monster not of wickedness only, but of absurdity. Throughout the debates of last session the kingdom of Ireland had been described by those gentlemen as the theatre on which his right hon. friend acted all the bloody scenes, wherein his heart delighted; where he gave a loose to his tyrannical disposition, and revelled in iniquity without question or control. In this country, it was said, there was something like a parliament to check him in his career—but there no eye watched, no hand restrained him—the parliament of that country was no otherwise efficient than to aid his excesses in the first instance, and afterwards to cover them from inquiry, it was at once the instrument and the screen of his oppressions. Well, but if all this was so—what became of the charge which had been made to-night?—If Ireland was already so completely his own, what need to foment a rebellion to make it more so? If the Irish parliament was so entirely subservient to his wicked purposes, what need to get rid of it? why should he throw away his instrument, and throw down his screen? If this were so, he must be the stupidest of tyrants, the most blundering of cut-throats, an assassin so poor in contrivance as to strip himself at once of his dagger and his cloak. He entreated the House to consider whether this was likely to be a true character of his right hon. friend: he did not mean to contend for his moral character;—he admitted him blood-thirsty and by nature cruel, if they pleased; but was he likely to mix so much folly with his malignity? was he likely to be so ignorant, so perverse, so ill-managing, so absolutely directorial in his tyrannous usurpation, as this charge represented him to be?

But from probabilities the gentlemen on the other side of the House had come to facts. His right hon. friend did create the rebellion in Ireland—for he recalled

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lord Fitzwilliam, and the recall of lord Fitzwilliam produced the rebellion according to them. Undoubtedly, he did recall lord Fitzwilliam. Fortunately the world was not now in ignorance as to the causes of that recall. Lord Fitzwilliam was sent to Ireland with instructions not to bring forward the Catholic question nor to allow it to be brought forward at that time, if he could prevent it. The Catholic question was brought forward:—and lord Fitzwilliam was recalled. Undoubtedly, too, there were those who, at the time of that transaction, predicted all sorts of evils to Ireland from the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam. Many evils had, in truth, happened since; but nevertheless he was not inclined to allow that the prediction was fulfilled. He was far from meaning any thing disrespectful either to the worthy and enlightened nobleman whose name was thus brought in question, or to his friends. But when other causes of such dreadful efficacy were manifestly operating in Ireland precisely as they had operated in other parts of Europe, he could not compliment so outrageously and so unseasonably, as to ascribe the distractions of that country to any thing personal to an individual, however highly he might respect him. He could not read the confessions of those self-convicted traitors, who had, as it were, with their own hands, administered the poisoned chalice to their country, he could not read their confession that French principles and French intrigue were the ingredients of that infectious draught, and yet continue to consider the recall of lord Fitzwilliam as the only cause of the malady by which Ireland had been convulsed and almost destroyed.

With regard to the predictions which were referred to on this subject, they reminded him of a prediction once very successfully employed by another great viceroy; a man with whom it would be no disparagement to the talents and political sagacity of the respectable nobleman in question, to be compared—he meant Columbus. Columbus, as every body must remember to have read, when the people of Hispaniola, growing weary of their new guests, resolved to drive them away from their coast, and with that view refused to furnish them with any more provisions—Columbus addressed himself to the chiefs, and with an unusual solemnity of tone and deportment, informed them, that on a certain day the heavens should be overcast;—the sun should hide his head; and then, in the darkness that would cover their land, they should acknowledge the anger of the offended deity, whose minister and messenger he was. It could hardly be necessary to inform the House, that Columbus was enabled, by the aid of his pocket almanack, to foretel an eclipse, of which the Indians, not being provided with any similar almanack, were wholly unapprized. And it could scarcely be necessary to add, that upon the eclipse taking place, as Columbus had foretold it, the Indians, convinced of his more than mortal power, hastened to make their peace with him, and to offer every atonement for their former impiety. Now, Sir, said Mr. Canning, I conceive that it required not much more knowledge of moral than Columbus possessed of physical causes, to discover in the situation of Ireland, in the distribution of the different classes of society, in the state and temper of the lower orders of the people, materials, which, if a spark from the dreadful conflagration of the French revolution should fall upon them, would presently burst into explosion: for the sagacity which enabled them to foresee and foretel this, I give those who did foretell it full credit. But as to the connexion of this event with the recall of lord Fitzwilliam, I confess I believe that lord Fitzwilliam's recall was not more immediately the occasion of the rebellion, than the displeasure of Columbus was the cause of the eclipse.

But then, Sir, be the causes which have led to the present situation of things in Ireland what they may, there is another origin assigned by gentlemen on the opposite side of the House for this frantic measure of a union. It originates, we are told, from the intoxication of power, the wildness and wantonness of uncontrolled authority in my right hon. friend; a power and authority which no minister before him ever possessed, and which, it seems, is an object of peculiar and watchful jealousy to such of those gentlemen as have not yet wholly abandoned their parliamentary duty. Sir, how far the power which my right honourable friend is supposed to possess may exceed that of former ministers, I shall not inquire: but that the degree of power possessed by a minister in this country, grounded as it must be on the confidence of parliament and of the people, growing only with that confidence, and ceasing with it, is in all cases to be considered as matter of suspi-

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cion and of danger, I cannot allow. It is not for the degree of his power, but for the use which he may make of it, that a minister is arraignable before the bar of that public opinion which, in fact, confers, and which most effectually controls its exercise. But if a minister does find himself, from the enlarged confidence of the country, or from the peculiar conjuncture of the times, in possession of a greater sway and authority than has belonged to ordinary governments at ordinary times, such a minister is, indeed, bound to consider himself as placed in a most high and solemn trust; to consider what has been entrusted to him, not as a good to be enjoyed, but as a duty to be performed. He ought to take good heed, that if his power exceeds and abounds beyond what is necessary for carrying on the every-day business of the country, that excess and that abundance does not run to waste. For the use of the ordinary power which belongs to his situation, he is answerable to the sovereign who employs, to the parliament who trusts him, and to his contemporaries, whose interests are committed to his care; for the use of the surplus beyond what the ordinary administration of affairs requires, he owes, and if he be worthy of his character and high station, he will feel, a responsibility no less binding;—he owes it first to his own conscience, and then, not to his own age only, but to parliaments of future times, and to generations of men yet unborn.—If we looked to the history of Ireland, Sir, perhaps we might find that no small part of the unsettled and comparatively unimproved state of the country might be traced to the want of some more steady and effective power in the governments which have succeeded each other in that kingdom: each of which, from the shortness of its duration, and from the necessity (consequent upon frequent change) of employing the whole of its influence and authority to secure support to its measures during its own temporary existence,—has been strong, indeed, for that purpose, strong for the ordinary administration of the affairs of the day, but wholly inadequate to the entertainment of larger views, to the founding of more comprehensive systems, for remote improvements, and for permanent advantage to the country. And this, Sir, I conceive to be one of the main evils which the union is calculated to remedy.

If we look to the history of this country, what is it that most marks and distinguishes the last eighty years, the period which has elapsed since the happy establishment of the present family upon the throne, from almost any other period in the history of any nation of the world? It is, perhaps, that during a period the most flourishing and the most happy with which any nation ever was blessed, in which the civil and political rights of the subject have been better understood and more uninterruptedly enjoyed, in which the government has been more powerful and respected abroad, foreign commerce more abundant, peaceful industry more effectually protected, and private wealth and comfort more generally diffused throughout the country, than at any the proudest period that the mightiest empires of the antient or modern world can boast: there is yet less proof left to posterity of the wisdom or splendor of that period—there is less of public institution, of permanent establishment, which dates its origin within that period—there appears to have been less done for posterity during that period—than in many periods of the history of many nations, which could by no means vie with it in happiness or in glory. Is it because there has been a dearth of great talents, or eminent qualities, in the statesmen that flourished during those years? Certainly not. Some of the names which grace these annals might be enrolled with the greatest names of any age, or any country of the world. I would venture therefore to ascribe this particularity to the constant struggle for political power, to the conflict and balance of parties, which prevailed almost universally during the whole of that time. If any person were to dispute this theory, they would naturally quote the long administration of sir Robert Walpole as an instance of pretty secure preponderance, and of power sufficiently established to have enabled him to attempt and carry into effect any plans of lasting utility. But how stands the fact upon this subject? Twice only does that minister appear to have carried his views beyond his own time, and to have felt an ambition to establish institutions that should connect his name with advantages to be enjoyed by posterity: and in both these instances he was foiled—I allude, Sir, to the sinking fund, which he had at one time been proud to consider as the lasting monument of his fame, but of which, with his own hands, he began to undermine the

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foundation: and to the well-known excise scheme, of the benefits of which he to the last declared himself firmly and immoveably convinced, but which was overborne by the popular clamour excited against it by his political antagonists. That he was sincere in his endeavours to carry the latter measure, and that he was most reluctantly forced to abandon it, cannot be doubted; and with regard to the sinking fund, though he was not driven to the violation of it by a parliamentary opposition, yet his defence of himself for so weak and impolitic a resource was grounded on his apprehension of the opposition which would have been directed against any other method of raising the supplies of the year. After his failure in these two instances, sir Robert Walpole contented himself with applying whatever power he possessed to the carrying on, as smoothly as he could, the ordinary business of the country. I am not praising or blaming sir Robert Walpole for his conduct, either in these instances, or in general, I am merely stating the facts. And I would ask, what is the inference to be drawn from them? If it be excusable in a minister who has, or fancies himself to have, barely sufficient power to maintain himself in his station, to rest satisfied with doing the duty of the day, and leaving the country exactly where he found it, does it follow, that it is matter of accusation and criminal charge, or matter of sober and founded suspicion and jealousy against another minister, whom other times and other circumstances may have furnished with more extensive power, that his views for the good of his country expand in proportion to his capacity for serving it; that he looks beyond the routine of his official duty, beyond the momentary necessities of the day in which he lives; and that he lays the foundations of a fabric which may endure for ages, and which may afford to united nations a lasting shelter and security?

I beg pardon of the House, Sir, for having suffered myself to be led into a discussion of this nature, and for having detained them so much longer than when I rose I had any intention of trespassing upon their attention. I have but one word more to say. We are cautioned that no union but that of affection can be lasting or advantageous. Sir, I know it. And to argue whether or not the union now proposed will be such an union, is to argue the whole question of the probable advantages that will result from it. For do not let us be led to imagine, that the Irish, however spirited and quick in feeling are creatures of passion only; that they are not capable of appreciating real benefits, or of being convinced by a fair appeal to their understanding. Such an appeal it is the business of this address to secure. If the union shall be found upon examination to offer solid and permanent advantages to that country, let us not be apprehensive that the proposal of it by Great Britain can long be construed into insult or unkindness. Fear not, Sir: if from this root shall spring and thrive the peace, the prosperity, the happiness of Ireland, the affections of the Irish people will grow and flourish with them: they will be engrafted on the same stock, and confirmed with the same strength: "Crescent illæ, crescetis amores!" In the confidence that this will be the case, I discharge by my vote for the address this night what I feel to be a divided duty. As a member of the British parliament, I give my hearty concurrence to a measure which will consolidate and augment the strength and resources of the empire: but as connected with Ireland by many ties of blood and of affection, I contend still more anxiously for what I conceive to be involved in the issue of this question, the safety and future prosperity of Ireland.

Lord *W. Russell* thought the settlement of 1782 was the solemn recognition of a right which we could not call upon the Irish to abandon. It was said that no kind of force was to be used; but how did this correspond with the conduct of ministers in removing all the servants of the crown in Ireland who presumed to differ from them on this question?

Mr. *Pitt* said, that after the full discussion which the subject had undergone, he should only say a few words upon a subject upon which he had been so unfortunate as to differ from a right hon. general. What had fallen from that right hon. general had completely proved, that that which was called the final adjustment of 1782, was not considered by those by whom it was effected as a final adjustment between the two countries; but that, on the contrary, the ministers of that day were fully convinced of the necessity of adopting some farther measures to strengthen the connexion betwen the two countries. The right hon. general, after having seen the papers alluded to, had admitted that the duke of Portland had

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entertained the propriety of adopting some farther measures after the final adjustment. The right hon. general seemed to think that it was only an opinion which the duke had slightly entertained, and soon gave up. In answer to this he would read to the House some letters, which would prove that it was not an opinion only cursorily entertained either by the duke of Portland, or by the king's ministers. Mr. Pitt then proceeded to read a variety of extracts from letters which passed between the duke of Portland, lord Shelburne, and the marquis of Rockingham, upon this subject.*

The House then agreed with the Lords in the said Address, and the blank therein was filled up with the words "and Commons."

April 26. Both Houses attended his majesty with their joint Address; to which his majesty gave this Answer:

"My Lords and Gentlemen; I receive, with the greatest satisfaction, the deliberate opinion of my two Houses of Parliament on this interesting subject; and you may depend on my embracing the first favourable opportunity of communicating to my parliament of Ireland the proposi-

* The following are Copies of the said Letters:

No. I.—From the Duke of Portland, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, to Lord Shelburne, Secretary of State.

Dublin Castle, 6th May, 1782.

My Lord; The confidence I find reposed in me is certainly extremely flattering. I will meet it as it deserves, by continuing to write without any reserve. Under the impression of the unavoidable necessity of conceding all the points required, for the sake of deriving any real advantage from the possession of this country, I do recommend that positive assurances be given, that the alteration of the Mutiny bill, and the modification of Poyning's law shall be conceded to them in the form required by their address; that the 6th of Geo. 1st shall be repealed, and that writs of error shall no longer be received by our court of King's-bench; but that, as Great Britain by these concessions, is desirous not only of satisfying the expectations of the Irish upon all constitutional points, but of preventing every possible source of future jealousy and discontent, she does not doubt of receiving an unequivocal testimony of a corresponding disposition on the part of Ireland, and is persuaded that the parliament of this country will co-operate in the most effectual method, either with the king's confidential servants, or with commissioners appointed by the parliament of Great Britain, or through the medium of the chief governor of the kingdom, to settle the precise limits of that independence which is required, the consideration that should be given for the protection expected, and the share it would be proper for them to contribute towards the general support of the empire in pursuance of the declaration contained in the concluding paragraph of their own address. The regulation of their trade is a subject, which, I think, would very properly make a part of the treaty, and which, from the dissatisfaction expressed by many commercial persons at the delusive advantages of the free trade, would be a very fit and necessary subject for discussion. I need not inform your lordship that they will find precedents in the first volume of the Journals of their own House of Commons, of Committees or Agents being sent to England to represent their grievances and obtain redress.—As every letter your lordship has received from me has progressively received the hopes I first held out to you, it will be natural for you to expect that I should assign a reason for supposing that the plan which I have submitted to you will accomplish the event we desire. All I can say is, that, in my apprehension, it ought to accomplish that event. In my apprehension, proposals, such as I have stated, cannot be resisted in parliament with any effect. They so directly correspond with the wishes of the public, that I conceive that no artifice could induce them to support an opposition to them; the refusal to accede to them, or to appoint commissioners for a final adjustment, on the grounds of their own address, when they should be assured that persons were properly authorized for that purpose, would be such an indication of sinister designs as would warrant your directions to me to throw up the government, and to leave them to that fate which their folly and treachery should deserve. If such should be the sentiments of the king's servants, after using every endeavour to bring them to a true sense of their condition, and of the consequences of such a refusal, I should hesitate as little to order the yacht, and to leave them to be the victims of their own insanity, as I should to say that it would be useless to attempt to coerce them, and that the country upon such terms would not be worth possessing.—Suffer me, my lord, once more to repeat my most earnest instances for a speedy determination. There are passages in the two last letters I had the honour of receiving from you which make me think that there is little or no difference in our opinions upon this unhappy subject; and let me add, that unless a negotiation can be entered into with persons properly authorized by the parliament of this country, and that the object is

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tions which you have laid before me, as calculated to form the basis of a complete and entire union between Great Britain and Ireland.—Such a settlement, established by mutual consent, and founded on a sense of mutual interest and affection,

to go fairly to the bottom of the busines and to form a new system of relation between the two countries, upon the basis of their mutual interests, the character of the present administration will be lost, and the English government must be prepared to renounce all pretensions to respect or influence in this country. I am, &c. &c. PORTLAND.

No. II.—To Mr. ———, dated Dublin Castle, 26th May, 1782.

Sir;—I should be very glad to hear that lord Charlemont was inclined to accede to any part, or even to the idea of such a plan, as you have been so obliging as to communicate to me. I should consider it as a material step to that situation in which I am sure it is the interest of both kingdoms to be placed, being convinced, that whatever is most like a union is the most probable bond of connexion to restore and perpetuate the harmony and prosperity of the two countries. I am, &c.

PORTLAND.

No. III.—Extract of a Letter from the Marquis of Rockingham to the Duke of Portland, dated Wimbledon, 25th May, 1782.

The essential points on the part of Ireland now acceded to, will, I trust establish a perfect cordiality between the two countries; and as there can no longer exist any grounds of contest or jealousy on matters of right between the countries, the only object of both will be, how finally to arrange, settle, and adjust all matters, whereby the union of power and strength, and mutual and reciprocal advantage, may be best permanently fixed. I observe in lord Shelburne's letter to your grace, dated the 18th May, he states more reluctance to the idea of commissioners than I should judge to be a general opinion of his majesty's servants: the measure may be a doubtful one; but if it appeared to be the inclination among the leading gentlemen of Ireland, I should think good would ensue.

No. IV.—Extract of a Letter from the Duke of Portland to the Earl of Shelburne; dated Dublin Castle, 5th June, 1782.

I have now stated to your lordship every matter that I can think likely to come before, parliament, and have farther to add, that the desire which is generally and emphatically expressed for a speedy conclusion of the session, will very forcibly tend to unite gentlemen in discountenancing any attempt to bring on questions of any sort at this season of the year. I presume your lordship will be of opinion that it is not desirable to oppose the wishes of this country respecting as early a prorogation as the business before them will admit. Nor, indeed, am I disinclined to recommend it; for the passions of this nation do not appear to me as yet to have sufficiently subsided to let the gratitude which is felt, pass quietly and confidentially through that channel which can alone direct it to the reciprocal advantages of both kingdoms.—There is no doubt of government being able to stop any mischief; but I cannot so readily take upon me to answer for the immediate attainment of the benefits which the liberality of Great Britain entitles her to expect. Unless, therefore, one very great measure, which I will make the subject of a separate letter, can be obtained, I submit to your lordship the propriety of coinciding in the wishes of the parliament, by putting an end to the present session, as soon as may be after the return of the bills from England.

No. V.—From the Duke of Portland to the Earl of Shelburne; dated Dublin Castle, 6th June, 1782.

My lord;—The measure which I stated to your lordship, in my letter of last night, as a sufficient inducement for deferring the prorogation of parliament, is of so delicate a nature, and requires so much secrecy and management, that I think it unadvisable to trust the communication of it to any hand but my own; and as it is possible that the event may not justify the hopes I entertain, it would perhaps, be more prudent to withhold the intelligence which I am now about to give you, until I could transmit the plan properly authenticated, for the consideration of your lordship, and the rest of the k—'s confidential servants. However, as I feel that I have a right to take credit for my endeavours, and that the ministers in England equally partake of my responsibility in the administration of the affairs of this country, I am as anxious that they should share any merit that can be derived from our joint conduct, as that they should be liable to any blame to which the adoption of ill-advised or inconsiderate measures may expose them. I shall therefore acquaint your lordship, that I have reason to hope that I may be shortly enabled to lay before you the sketch or outlines of an act of parliament, to be adopted by the legislatures of the respective kingdoms; by which the superintending power and supremacy of Great Britain, in all matters of state and general commerce, will be virtually and effectually acknowledged; that a share of the expense, in carrying on a defensive or offensive war, either in support of our own dominions, or those of our allies, shall be borne by Ireland in proportion to the actual state of her abilities; and that she will adopt every such regulation as may be judged necessary by Great Britain, for the better ordering and securing her trade and commerce

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would, I am persuaded, produce the happiest effects in promoting the security and happiness of both kingdoms, and in confirming and augmenting the stability, power, and resources of the empire."

Report of the Committee of the House of Commons on the State of Cold Bath Fields Prison.] April 19. Mr. W. Dundas made the following Report from the Committee appointed to inquire into the State of Cold Bath Fields Prison, Clerkenwell:

REPORT.

Your Committee have, pursuant to the order of the House, proceeded to examine into the several matters referred to their consideration; and in the investigation of this subject, have directed their inquiry to the general state of the said prison, and the plan which has been adopted for its regulation and management.

It appears to your committee, not only from the evidence adduced to them, but also from their personal observation, that the prison is erected on a high and dry situation; that it is kept perfectly clean; that the cells for solitary confinement are dry and airy.

It also appears, from the evidence laid before your committee, that the health of the prisoners has been generally good, and that when, from two hundred and fifty to three hundred prisoners were in the prison, there

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with foreign nations, or her own colonies and dependencies, consideration being duly had to the circumstances of this country. I am flattered with the expectation of receiving the most positive assurances from — — — — — of their support in carrying such a bill through both Houses of parliament; and in case such an object could be obtained, I should presume that it would be very advisable to trespass upon the patience of this country to bring it to perfection, even in the present moment. Your lordship may depend upon the earliest account of my success and progress in this business. I have, &c. PORTLAND.

No. VI.—From Lord Shelburne to the Duke of Portland; dated June 9.

My lord;—In the very instant of the departure of the messenger with the dispatches accompanying this letter, I have the honour to receive your grace's of the 5th and 6th. The contents of the letter are too important to hesitate about detaining him, while I assure your grace of the satisfaction I know your letter will give the king. I have lived in the most anxious expectation of some such measure offering itself. Nothing prevented my pressing it in this dispatch, except having repeatedly stated the just expectations of this country, I was apprehensive of giving that the air of demand which would be better left to a spirit of voluntary justice, gratitude, and foresight. I gave your grace confidence for watching the temper of those you had to deal with, and cannot express the pleasure it gives me to find that confidence justified. Bargains and compacts may accomplish little objects—Great ends must be obtained by a nobler and more generous policy. No matter who has the merit, let the two kingdoms be one, which can only be by Ireland now acknowledging the superintending power and supremacy to be where nature has placed it in precise and unambiguous terms. I am sure I need not inculcate to your grace the importance of words in an act which must decide on the happiness of ages, particularly in what regards contribution and trade, subjects most likely to come into frequent question. Your grace will have every merit I can give you. I have only to assure your grace of every support necessary to carry this measure, and of the most confidential return to every communication you think the public service may require.—I entirely agree in your grace's reasons for putting as speedy an end as possible to the present session, unless the measure you have in contemplation can be obtained. The king is at Windsor, and every one else out of town; I therefore only write the sentiments of your grace's faithful servant.

SHELBURNE.

No. VII.—Extract of a Letter from the Duke of Portland, to the Earl of Shelburne; dated Dublin Castle, 22d June, 1782.

The disappointment and mortification I suffer by the unexpected change in those dispositions which had authorized me to entertain the hopes I had, perhaps, too sanguinely expressed in the letter which I had the honour of writing to your lordship the 6th instant, must not prevent my acquainting you, that for the present those expectations must be given up. I trust, and am inclined to flatter myself, they are only suspended, and that they will be revived when the temper of this country shall have recovered its tone, and acquired that degree of composure which must give it the firmness necessary for effectuating so wise and salutary a measure. Mr. F—— will have informed your lordship of some very unpleasant circumstances which were likely to have happened a very few days before the adjournment, the traces of which are strongly marked in the address from the Leinster volunteers, which I have this day the honour of transmitting to you, but which, I think, are to be attributed to a suspicion of the possible effect of a negotiation. By the account of the event of those three or four days, and of the timidity and jealousy of the first people in this country, it is clear to my apprehension, that any injudicious or offensive measure may be prevented, but that any attempts to conciliate the minds of this nation to any such measure as I intimated the hope of, would at this moment be delusive and impossible.

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were not more than four or five sick in the hospital at any one time; that the provisions are sufficient, good, and wholesome, and that no complaints at any time have been made to the magistrates respecting them.

Your Committee have, however, to remark, that the printed regulations for the management of the prison, have not been hung up in a conspicuous part of the prison, as is required by the statutes relating thereto; and that the journals of the prison, as directed by the regulations, have not been fully and regularly kept.

Your Committee have, besides, directed their attention to the petition of Edward Marcus Despard; which states, That he had been confined a close prisoner, under a warrant from the duke of Portland, since the 22d of April till the 25th of November last; that he was confined in a damp cell about seven feet square, with no article of furniture, except a bed laid on some oaken planks fastened to the wall, and that, during the first six weeks of his confinement, he had no allowance but bread and water.

It appears in evidence to your Committee, that the circumstances of the time, and the public safety, rendered it indispensably necessary that Edward Marcus Despard should be kept, at the time of his commitment, in close and separate confinement; that the cell in which he was so confined was not damp as stated in his petition; that he was removed, on the 25th November, into a room with a fire in it, and glazed windows; that although for the first six weeks of his confinement, he had only the prison allowance for persons committed for re-examination, yet that during the whole of that period he was supplied with provisions sent in by his friends, or procured for him at a reasonable rate in the prison. It is also alleged in the petition, that his health was materially injured; but that certainly does not appear from the evidence before your committee, for he has never applied for medical assistance; and his only disorders seem to have been, after the fullest examination on this head, a return of rheumatism contracted abroad, and occasionally chilblains on his feet. It is stated in the petition, that he was not allowed to walk in the garden; but it appears that he had permission to walk in a court; and that, after the first two months of his confinement, he was permitted to walk a part of the day uninterruptedly with his wife in an open part of the prison, adjoining to and communicating with the garden, and distinct from the court of his cell.

Your Committee do not think themselves called upon to state a variety of other circumstances which have come under their consideration; but they are anxious to refer the House to the evidence in the appendix, to prove how much it has been their wish and endeavour to fulfil the objects of their appointment; that they have examined the persons mentioned by Edward Marcus Despard in his petition, as to the facts alleged in it; and that they have themselves visited the prison, and have found every part of it in the highest degree of order, clean and dry, the prisoners healthy, and their food good and wholesome.

Your Committee have also to remark, that from the very laudable vigilance and attention of the visiting magistrates, it is extremely improbable that any impropriety of conduct, or unnecessary severity in the gaoler, could long have escaped their notice.

Your Committee have peculiar satisfaction in being able to state to the House the result of their inquiries, as a full and direct refutation of the unfounded statements, and absurd and wicked reports, which have been industriously circulated, with respect to the prison and its internal management: And upon the whole, your committee have come to the following Resolutions:—1. That it is the opinion of this committee, that the prison in Cold Bath Fields is erected in a dry and airy situation, and is well adapted for the purposes of its institution as a House of Correction, as well as for those of close and separate confinement and safe custody. 2. That all parts of the prison are kept perfectly clean, and that the health of the prisoners has been remarkably good. 3. That the attention of the magistrates to the general management of the prison, has been exemplary and meritorious.

Debate in the Commons on the Report from the Secret Committee relative to Seditious Societies.] April 19. The House having resolved itself into a Committee of the whole House, to consider of the Report* which, upon the 15th of March last was made from the Committee of Secrecy, the Lord Mayor in the chair,

Mr. *Pitt* rose and said:—Sir; It is not my intention to take up much of your time in the observations I am about to make: for the report of the secret committee is full of such convincing proofs, and the facts before you speak so plainly and forcibly, that it would be useless to recapitulate or to make any comments on any part of that report, the whole of which must have impressed conviction on the mind of every man in the House. I shall therefore confine myself to stating the outline of two bills which are become necessary from the statements contained in the report, and which, should the House think proper to adopt them, will, in my mind, prove effectual to check the present danger. I shall take it for granted that there are not two opinions in the House with respect to the propriety of enforcing the measures of salutary precaution, which

* For a copy of the Report, see p. 579

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have hitherto proved such powerful barriers against the malignant, perfidious, and destructive spirit of conspiracy. We find, upon the report of the committee, the necessity of enabling his majesty to apprehend and detain the persons of the conspirators; and it cannot be denied that the measures which have been already taken for that purpose have been followed by the most beneficial effects. But it must not pass unnoticed, that independently of the report of the committee, facts have come out of so dubitable a nature, and so dangerous in their tendency, as would have justified us in enabling his majesty to continue those salutary precautions. The object of my first motion will therefore be, not only to continue to his majesty the power of securing and detaining persons accused of treason and sedition, but to render that power more effectual, by making it adequate to the necessity of the circumstances which have arisen, and may hereafter occur. I mean, Sir, that we should give to his majesty the power of transferring from the metropolis to any part of the kingdom the persons detained for treasonable and seditious practices. Both in this country, and in the sister kingdom, one of the leading features of the conspirators has been, to continue the conspiracy during the imprisonment. They have, in the place of their imprisonment, been industriously occupied in preparing the materials of sedition, and in providing means to diffuse the spirit of insurrection. With a similar view, I wish that his majesty should have the power of detaining in this country those who have been confined in Ireland in consequence of the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act. But it is not enough to confine ourselves within the line of preservation which has been marked out by the necessity of the case. We must proceed still farther. We are involved in a contest for every consideration that is most valuable to us, and it is our duty to make provisions suited to the case from time to time. In taking this general view of the question, it is therefore one great and leading object to prevent the existence of those societies, as detailed in the report of the secret committee. Societies which, however differing in name, have but one common end — the subversion of the constitution, and the diffusion of the principles of anarchy. They were all equally engaged in the common cause of ruin, and their aim was directed to the same fatal object. Yet, believing that many weak-minded individuals have been drawn into the snares that were perfidiously laid for them, I propose only a prospective remedy. After the mass of guilt which appears on the report, we should be justified in proceeding with greater severity. But it will, I trust, be sufficient for us to provide against future guilt. It will, I hope, be sufficient for us to set a mark upon that House into which the pestilential breath of Jacobinism has entered. I mean to hold out a warning to prevent the infection from extending, and at the same time to let the benefits of an amnesty operate in the most salutary manner. But while we act with this indulgence, a light summary punishment should be inflicted on the offenders. I therefore submit that whoever shall continue to be a member of such societies, after a certain day to be named, shall have a small fine inflicted on him upon conviction before a magistrate. There must, however, be degrees of guilt in the cases of individuals. I therefore wish to give an option with respect to the recovery of the penalty, or to proceed against the offender in a court of record, leaving it to the discretion of the court to punish him by fine, imprisonment, or by transportation. There are three societies already too well known—the Corresponding Society, the United Irishmen, and the United Englishmen, but as it is impossible to guard against all the various shapes and forms which treason may assume, it will be necessary to define those societies, the members of which are to be subjected to the proceedings now proposed to be instituted against them. I will therefore observe, that their peculiar characteristics are contrary to every engagement prescribed by the constitution, by morality, and religion. They are bound together by ties of secrecy, and are connected by oaths, which not only conceal the names of the leaders from the knowledge of government, but also from their associates themselves. I wish that societies concealing themselves by such methods, should be liable to similar proceedings as those against the societies which I have expressly named. But, this is not sufficient: and it will be found requisite to accompany this measure by provisions against the owners of public and private houses who shall harbour such societies. These provisions will complete the first part of the plan. The second object will

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be, to prevent the existence of other societies which are evidently calculated to corrupt the morals and vitiate the understanding of the community. I mean debating societies, in which questions are agitated little suited to the capacity of the audience, and which operate to loosen the foundations of morality, religion, and social happiness. In a former session measures were adopted to prevent the delivery of political lectures but attempts have been made to elude them by delivering historical lectures, which, by misrepresentation and the force of erroneous inference, are rendered equally dangerous. With this view of the subject, I trust there can be no objection to extend the proposed provisions to all societies where money is taken for admission: and that none shall be held unless licensed by a magistrate, and liable to his inspection. I now come to the third head, which is the most important, as it relates to the liberty of the press. We cannot too highly prize that sacred liberty when we consider that it has been instrumental in bringing our constitution to that envied perfection which it possesses. Yet it must also be admitted that when abused, the most fatal consequences have ever resulted from it. It has been the great principle of the constitution that the liberty of the press should flourish, but it is also clear from the nature of the principle itself, and for the security of the press, that the author or publisher of every work should be amenable to the laws of his country. This doctrine is founded on the nature of justice, for every one must be responsible for the act which he commits, and, reasoning this way, we only place the author or publisher in the situation of those who know that their conduct ought to be regulated by the laws of the country to which they are subject. With respect to publication addressed to the higher classes, this species of libel, so common some years ago, has greatly declined; but, unfortunately for the liberty of the press, it has lately been degraded and abused for the purpose of calling the attention of the lower orders of the people to objects of discussion of the most mischievous tendency, objects which are not calculated for their understandings, and which are of all others the most liable to be attended with dreadful effects. I wish to make it impossible that any publication should be circulated without attaching the responsibility to the author or publisher of it. It is but a measure of common right to let the name of the author or publisher be affixed to the publication, that any person who shall be injured may know to whom he is to look for redress. But in order to make the measure effectual, and prevent the press from becoming an engine of corruption and innovation in the hands of factions who are ready to circulate cheap publications, adapted to inflame and pervert the public mind, it will be necessary to keep a general register, not only of the presses used by printers, but of those in the possession of private persons. It is also my intention, to oblige persons in the first instance, to register the types, and the names of the persons to whom they are sold, that a knowledge of all the parties may be more easily obtained. I must also observe, the names and licences to be changed as often as the property is shifted. There may exist a necessity for the adoption of farther precautions; it is not for me to anticipate them, but as far as I have stated, I think the remedy adequate to the evil complained of. I shall conclude with moving, "That it is the opinion of this committee, 1. That leave be given to bring in a bill for further continuing for a time to be limited, and rendering more effectual, an act, passed in the last session, intituled, 'An Act to 'empower his majesty to secure and de-'tain such persons as his majesty shall 'suspect are conspiring against his per-'son and government.' 2. That, leave be given to bring in a bill for the more effectual suppression of societies established for seditious and treasonable purposes, and for prevention of other treasonable and seditious practices."

Mr. *Tierney* said:—The right hon. gentleman has not dwelt long on the report of the secret committee. I am not at a loss to guess the reason why he did not; for a report less supported by evidence, I believe, was never made to this House. I am ready to admit that the committee have stated nothing but what appears to them to be right; but feeling how very liable to failure, their judgments must be, I am justified in doubting the soundness of the conclusions they have drawn. I do not know the nature of the testimony that has been given to them, for they have kept that out of view; I therefore must be pardoned, if I withhold my assent to the mass of that report until I am made acquainted with the nature of the evidence on which it is

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founded. I need not say that I therefore withhold my assent to the measure proposed, because that measure is founded on that report. But supposing the report to be justified by the evidence, that would not be a reason for adopting the measure proposed. The present laws of the land are sufficient for the purpose of removing all the evil of which the right hon. gentleman complains. I agree that government ought to be strong, but I defy any man to point out to me a period in the history of this country, when government was so strong as it is at this hour. With the exception of France, what government ever possessed stronger measures against sedition than the present government of this country? They have all the powers of seduction, and the terrors of punishment that can be devised. Let gentlemen who doubt this, consider what is the present state of the influence of the crown; and let them compare it with what the influence of the crown was in this country in former times. The present government, or rather a much weaker one, has been found sufficient for the safety of this country for upwards of 100 years, with no other help than that of an occasional suspension of the Habeas Corpus act. That suspension, government have had the benefit of now for a considerable time. They have also the two bills against treason and sedition. Do they not provide, that to levy war, and to attempt to overawe the parliament, is high treason? Here is the principle of security which the right hon. gentleman has stated to night. But he is not contented; for he says, that measures of law should be adopted against all conspiracy; which seems to me to be only saying there should be no conspiracy. Why, the law has said that long ago. The law now upon this matter subjects every conspirator to punishment. The oaths which these conspirators are said to take are already declared unlawful. Is it a connexion with the French that you fear? To prevent any person from attempting to establish it, the laws are sufficient as they stand. Traitorous conspiracy with France is punishable with death; nay, to embark with an intent to go thither, is death. Administration have gained strength by the late regulations, with regard to newspapers: the proprietor is made liable for every thing that appears in his paper, and a great facility is given to any procedure against him. To endeavour to seduce the army or navy from their duty, is prohibited also under pain of death. Now I say, that coupling all these things together, the influence of the crown is greatly increased. The laws already in being are adequate to every good purpose of government. Is it then too much for me to pause before I assent to the granting of this new power? I voted for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act the year before the last, because I thought there was ground laid for suspecting that there were traitors in the country; but now I am called upon to vote for the continuance of the imprisonment of those of whose innocence I am induced to think favourably since; they have been imprisoned a year without being brought to trial. I cannot agree to this. But there is a case in which a man was confined in a solitary cell, with no means of sheltering himself from the rain but by excluding the light. By whomsoever this was done, it was an inhuman exercise of discretionary power. In 1793 several persons suspected of high treason were taken due care of without any of this rigour. To send to a penitentiary house a man against whom there is nothing proved, but who is only suspected, is monstrous. When men like colonel Despard are sent to such a place, and are torn from society and their friends, it is enough not only to affect their health, but to overpower their faculties. Had I known that any such abuse as this would have been allowed, I never should have voted for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act. With respect to removing persons to distant parts of the country, I can conceive cases in which that may be necessary. If the gaols be insecure, or if there be any apprehension of an insurrection in the capital, then government ought to have the power to remove prisoners: but is that the case? What is it, then, you want—close confinement, without light, to those whom you only suspect, but do not choose to try? They say, that much mischief has arisen in Ireland for want of due caution with regard to prisoners: to which I answer, that the neglect of the government of Ireland is no excuse for injustice in the parliament of England, nor any reason why we should impose new hardships on those who are innocent; for until they are tried, they are all supposed to be innocent. As to the second bill, it is of a description, the thought of which gives me infinite pain.

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That all societies which hold a correspondence with the French, should be put down, no man living can deny; but is not the law sufficient as it stands? Most certainly it is. The remedy proposed goes to the putting an end to all these societies together. I object to the system, of which this is only a branch; for the right hon. gentleman has told us he intends to propose laws from time to time upon this subject, as cases may arise to require them. I say these attempts lead to consequences of the most horrible kind. I see that government are acting thus. Those whom they cannot prove to be guilty, they will punish for their suspicion. To support this system, we must have a swarm of spies and informers. They are the very pillars of such a system of government. You will have the informer's word on the one hand, and the accused on the other; and suppose the informer told you there were pikes in any man's house, and he denied it; and that upon search they could not be found—to what does this system lead? Directly to the torture. These things lead to a military tribunal; for without military force they can never be carried into effect. Another operation of this bill is to pull down every club in the country, for it applies to places where money is taken for admission, and I know of no clubs where money is not taken. This will put an end to all public meetings upon political subjects. The right hon. gentleman disavows the idea of an *imprimatur*, but talks of another sort of liability. I have no partiality for an *imprimatur*, but according to the view I have of his plan, I had rather have it than this, for in that case I shall have security after publication, although I am subject to the will of another before it; but this seems to subject the press to the operation of a general licence. I have another objection to this measure, and that is, the inefficacy of it. For one man in former times, there are now forty who pay attention to political subjects. Government, therefore, are right in taking precautions; and the only question between us is, what is the right precaution? If you can prove that the laws against treason are not strong enough already make them so, and you shall have my cordial assent. If there are traitors in this country, the only hope they have, is in the discontent of the people. Unless you remove the cause of that discontent, you are doing nothing. I would try mild, rather than harsh measures. I believe, that at no period were the people more quiet than they are at this moment. But do not suppose that, because they are silent, they are happy. This silence is with some taken as a proof of happiness; but the best security for a government is in the free complaints of a people. What is the common artifice of those who wish to accomplish the overthrow of our government? What is the ground of discontent which they perpetually work upon? The present state of the representation of the people. Look at the works of the most busy among them, and you will find that this is your only hope. This art of fomenting discontent was brought to a sort of trial at the Old Bailey. That was the substance of the charge made against the prisoners. Undoubtedly there are many reformers, or men who call themselves so, who really aim at the overthrow of our constitution. There are others who want nothing more than a fair reform of abuses. Such are the men who ought to be attended to. Such I take the right hon. gentleman himself to be, and what I wish is, what he formerly expressed his wish to be—a system of representation which would freely let the sense of the people of England into the House of Commons. I do not say that he should pledge himself to any specific plan, or to give countenance to the principle of universal suffrage, or any wild or impracticable scheme; but that he should declare his attachment to a moderate and temperate reform in parliament. There is a difference of opinion amongst worthy men upon this subject. Some think that at this time the subject should not be mentioned. So far from thinking so, I am convinced it would be of the greatest advantage, that the right hon. gentleman should now give notice, that whenever peace arrives, he will take up the subject. This would take away from those who wish to create discontent, all pretext for what they are doing.

Colonel *Hope* said, that in his mind the measures now proposed did not go to the extent that was requisite. He recommended the enacting of a penalty against those who furnished money and advice to those societies, without, however, being members of them, for all such persons ought to be held up to the scorn and execration of the country.

The *Attorney General* said, that if he understood the hon. gentleman, he did not mean to deny the existence of those secret

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societies, but had said, that the remedy was to give some sort of a reform of parliament. But would a reform of parliament content those discontented minds? Let the House examine coolly the evidence they were possessed of, and they could not deny, that reform would do nothing to tranquillize the ferment excited by the machinations of such malignant spirits. He could assure the hon. gentleman, however obnoxious the character of an attorney general was to those men, they felt as little respect for the doctrines of the hon. gentleman, unless he would go the full length of universal representation, and the other points of their political creed. Unless he would agree to the annihilation of monarchy, the subversion of aristocracy, and the confusion of property; unless he would agree to a system which would make every rich man poor, and no poor man rich, he was doing nothing.—The hon. gentleman said, that there was no necessity for new laws, as the old ones were strong enough, and instanced the rebellions of 1715 and 1745, when the suspension of the Habeas Corpus was deemed sufficient. But what was the principle of those rebellions? It was a contention of rival royalties. The remedies then applied were commensurate with the case; but it did not apply to the parties of the present day, who wished that two branches of the legislature should not exist at all, and the third be founded on a different basis.—The hon. gentleman then alluded to certain prosecutions, and used as an argument against the necessity of new laws, that the old ones were not carried into execution. He would tell the hon. gentleman what he conceived to be the principle of the constitution; the constitution did not aim at perfection, farther than could with probability be attained; it endeavoured to guard against the danger that might occur from the generality of the terms used in framing any law; and, to prevent the chance of doing mischief, in removing an existing mischief. This he took to be the foundation of that principle of the English constitution, that justice should be administered in mercy. And it was as much a breach of the law to apply the letter of the law against its spirit, as to inflict punishment without the authority of any law at all; and hence flowed another principle of the constitution, that of applying, from time to time, to the legislature to suit the exigency of circumstances just as they arose. So he said with respect to prosecutions, being perfectly persuaded that one object of those men was, to destroy the liberty of the press by means of licentiousness. With that conviction on his mind, he should not do his duty, if he neglected to exercise the authority which the law had vested in him. In his situation as attorney general, he had such a bundle of papers in his possession, that he should be ashamed it were publicly known such had been the produce of the presses of this kingdom. But he could not go to the shops of obscure booksellers, in little alleys, and exercise a different law against them than what was put in force against the more extensive trader.—But the hon. gentleman had argued, that the laws were strong enough: that would best appear by a review of the four preceding years—when the Constitutional Society assumed a new character, when it enlisted and incorporated with itself the Corresponding Society, whose affiliated branches had debauched half the great towns in the kingdom. Though the objects which they pursued could not perhaps be made treason by the letter of the law, yet he felt no hesitation in now declaring, that from the facts then known, they warranted an indictment of high treason to be preferred against them, to call upon them for an explanation in order to qualify their acts, which, upon the face of them, appeared so very questionable. Supposing that the whole of the evidence which the House was now in possession of, had then been known, whole bodies of men could not be indicted for high treason; and therefore would it not be better policy, instead of pursuing with the severity of the law, to absolve the individuals and dissolve the societies, and thus prevent the necessity of extreme rigor? After the trials of 1794, several meetings took place in the neighbourhood of London, calculated not only to disturb the public peace, but to rob the poor labourer of a portion of his earnings, to support the traitorous purposes of the chiefs and leaders. By the law, as it then stood, they might unquestionably have been punished; but was it not better done, by the bill passed in parliament, to prevent those meetings? thus precluding the recurrence of the mischief, at the same time that it secured the freedom of every meeting for good or constitutional purposes.—But how could the law be applied to secret meetings,

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when the members were bound by oath not to give evidence against each other? Was it not, therefore, rather more desirable to apply new laws, than to bring forwards useless prosecutions?—The hon. gentleman had alluded to the suspension of the Habeas-Corpus act at former periods; but what would he say if the same course had been followed as in the periods to which he alluded; if he had informed himself of the extent of the numbers put in confinement, and never brought to any trial? If he had considered that point, he must have confessed that the present administration had conducted themselves with tenfold lenity compared with those periods. Was it not far better to effect this measure by the lenient measures adopted than by the forfeiture of lives, and the imposition of rigorous penalties? All agreed that the object of these societies were, to aid the influence of French principles, and therefore their dissolution was the great point to be effected.—The hon. gentleman mentioned the law which prohibited persons from going to France; but it was notorious that many persons had gone to France; that they carried on their correspondence with this country; and, in fact, it was not to be supposed that an act of parliament could have the power of preventing men from getting into a boat and sailing for France, if they were determined so to do. It was now a pretty notorious fact, that Mr. O'Connor had been guilty of high treason; but would it be severe to pass a law requiring him to quit his former connexion rather than to subject him to the penalties of the existing law?—He next came to that part which related to public debating societies. When the last bills upon the subject were brought forward, some of his tradesmen asked him, if he really meant to support a bill which would prevent them from drinking a social bowl together? Such an idea was never entertained; but the law has guarded that, under the pretence of instruction, those whose habits of life could not qualify them for such investigations, should not be seduced from the path of morality and religion. He would only request that gentlemen would to-morrow observe what subjects were announced in their bills for discussion, in order to determine whether they ought not to be put under some regulation.—He would not know enter into the regulations of the newspaper bill; but to see the benefits which had resulted from that measure, he only requested gentlemen to compare newspapers now, with what they were twelve months ago. Public and individual character was much more respected, and the necessity of a farther extension rested simply on this ground. An author publishes a libel, to which he affixes his name: the Corresponding Society immediately publish a new edition on cheap paper, which they circulate with unremitting industry. To this edition there is no publisher's name, nor any means of tracing the publication. It came, then, simply to this proposition, whether under some penalty they should be bound to tell who were the authors or publishers?

Mr. *Abbot* said, he differed so widely from the hon. member in thinking that the laws, as they stood at present, were sufficiently strong for the exigencies of the times, that he conceived the measures would have been still more complete, if they had extended to another object which was strikingly apparent upon the face of the present report, he agreed entirely with the chancellor of the exchequer, that the new forms and shapes which the dangers of the present times had assumed would unquestionably require that we should encounter them with new arms, and defend ourselves by new laws; but he thought that parliament would also do wisely in looking back to the policy of former times, and giving fresh force to those laws which our ancestors had considered to be indispensable to the public safety. Amongst the dangers of the present times we find it distinctly reported, not only that treasonable practices have been plotting by persons of mean note and desperate fortunes, but that, "in some degree they have received the countenance and pecuniary aid of persons of a higher situation in life:" and it was most manifest, that all treasons must derive much of their mischievous force and effect from the countenance and aid of such leaders. That so it was recently found in Ireland, so it had been notoriously in the beginnings of the revolution in France, that so it has been in all times, the history of all countries abundantly proves; and it may be taken as incontestably true, that wherever there is such a relaxation of the laws as encourages such leaders to show themselves openly, it is the final warning of destruction to the government—it is the handwriting upon the wall, and all who look upon it must tremble—To check traitors

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of this size, and repress mischiefs of this magnitude, it had been the invariable policy of the laws of England, from before the conquest down to the Revolution, to protect the throne and the constitution by ordaining that "lords of inheritance should be forfeited for treason." This system had been gradually extended in successive ages to different descriptions of landed property; and at length upon the union with Scotland, where the same policy had obtained, though within narrower limits, the English law of forfeiture for treason was established in that country with all its consequences. He conceived it not to be necessary at this time to enter upon any vindication of the general ground of this policy; the wisdom and justice of it must have been long since understood by all gentlemen who had reflected upon this point of constitutional jurisprudence, and especially by those who had ever looked into the able vindication of it, which was published towards the middle of the present century by a person once eminently distinguished in the courts of Westminster hall and in that House, by his learning, his talents, and virtues, of whose name it would be praise enough to say, that it had not been eclipsed even by the splendid abilities of those who had succeeded him in the same high offices.—But, Sir, although the law of forfeiture has been thus established and extended, singular as it may appear, the same parliament which extended it throughout Great Britain, did also in the same law, by some strange fatality, some infirmity of counsel, some prevalence of popular opinion, after recognizing its general expediency, seem to have supposed that no treason could spring up in this land, except such as must have its root in a predilection for the abdicated and exiled house of Stuart; and it enacted, that after the death of the then Pretender and the accession of the house of Hanover, no estate of inheritance should be forfeited for high treason. It is true, that in 1744, with the returning danger of the state, the energy of parliament seems also to have returned in some degree; but still the law fell short of its own professed end; and the forfeiture was enacted to continue only during the lives of the Pretender's sons. And the consequence is this, that at the present hour, whether landed inheritances are or are not forfeited by high treason, depends upon the life of the last descendant of that unfortunate race, the cardinal of York, at this time an aged and miserable fugitive, of whom, where he now is, or whether he be living or dead, no man in this House can with any confidence assert.—This, Sir, is the object which I wish to bring distinctly within the view of the House; and looking to the state of the law upon this matter as it now is, confronted with the treasonable practices exhibited in the report before us, I wish to ask of this House, whether it be wise or expedient to suffer that this fundamental law of the state, which has prevailed for upwards of 700 years, which has "grown with our growth, and strengthened with our strength," should now come to an end? And whether it is at this season proper to invert the scale and proportion of crimes and punishments in an article so nearly connected with the safety of the throne? For unless parliament interposes now, however strange it may appear, it is most incontrovertibly true that it will be less penal to commit high treason than to commit common felony.—Having submitted these considerations to the House, he should not presume to propose any resolutions upon this subject at this time, although he was by no means at a loss to state it in such terms as would embrace the proposition for which he was contending, but if, upon mature reflection, the House should be disposed to agree with him in the importance and prudence of the measure itself, he hoped it would be engrafted upon the rest in their progress through the House.

The resolutions were agreed to, and the said bills were afterwards brought in and passed.

Proceedings against Mr. Flower for a Paragraph in the Cambridge Intelligencer.] May 1. Lord Grenville said, that he had a Breach of Privilege to complain of, and moved that the bar be cleared. Strangers being withdrawn, his lordship made a complaint to the House of a paragraph in The Cambridge Intelligencer of the 20th of April, highly reflecting upon the bishop of Landaff,* and containing a breach of

* "In a few days after I had made this speech [on the union], I set forward for Westmoreland. Whilst I was on the road, lord Grenville brought to the bar of the House of Lords, one Flower, of Cambridge, for having been guilty of a breach of privilege, in publishing something against my speech; what that something was I never deigned to in-

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the privileges of the House. The said paper being read,—Resolved, "That the said paper is a gross and scandalous libel upon the right reverend Richard, lord bishop of Landaff, a member of this House; and a high breach of the privileges of this House." Ordered, "That the serjeant at arms do forthwith attach the body of Benjamin Flower, of Cambridge, printer, and bring him to the bar of this House on Friday next, to answer for the said offence."

May 3. Mr. Flower being brought to the bar, he was informed of the complaint made against him; and Mr. Flower having been heard as to what he had to say in answer to the said complaint, and having acknowledged himself to be the printer and publisher of the said paper, "Resolved, 1. That the said B. Flower is guilty of a high breach of the privileges of this House. 2. That he do, for his said offence pay a fine to the king of 100*l.* and that he be committed prisoner to Newgate for the space of six months, and until he pay the said fine."

Report from the Lords Committee of Secrecy relative to a Treasonable Conspiracy, &c.] May 27. Lord Grenville reported from the Lords Committee appointed to inspect the Papers delivered by his majesty's command (sealed up in a bag), containing secret information received by his majesty's government, relative to the proceedings of different persons and societies in Great Britain and Ireland engaged in a Treasonable Conspiracy, and to the design carried on by our enemies, in concert with such persons and societies, for effecting the separation of Ireland from this kingdom:

That the said papers, and the other informations which have been laid before them, contain the most decisive evidence of an extensive conspiracy carried on with unremitted industry, both in Great Britain and in Ireland, for the destruction of the laws and government; for the overthrow of every existing establishment, both in church and state; and for imposing, by force, on the people of these realms, under the influence and by the aid of France, a system subversive of public order, morality, and religion.

In the formation and progress of this conspiracy, your Committee have seen a constant and systematic adherence to that course which, having opened the way to all the calamities and crimes of France, has since been uniformly pursued by all those who, in various parts of Europe, have engaged in similar designs: and your Committee are therefore decidedly of opinion, that the criminal proceedings which have been established in evidence before them, are not to be considered merely as the acts of unconnected and obscure individuals, but as branches and members of an extensive and complicated system, which aims at nothing less than to subvert the whole order of society as now established in Europe. The means which are every where ultimately looked to for the accomplishment of this design have been exhibited in France in their fullest operation and extent; they have unhappily been (though in a less degree) exemplified in Ireland; and it is the painful duty of your Committee to lay before this House a general view of the plan which has been pursued by a part of their fellow-subjects in this kingdom, in order to prepare the way here for similar scenes of insurrection, rebellion, and

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quire. The punishment inflicted by the House was, as I remember, imprisonment for six months, and a fine of 100*l.* I sent the following letter to lord Grenville on the occasion; for I thought myself the more obliged to him, as I had no acquaintance with his lordship, and was wholly ignorant that I had been the object of Mr. Flower's abuse.—

"'Calgarth Park, Kendal, May 10, 1799.

"'My Lord;—I yesterday learned from 'the newspapers what has passed in the House 'of Lords relative to Mr. Flower. I am sen- 'sible that your lordship has taken up this 'matter from your great attention to the pub- 'lic service; yet I must beg you to allow me 'the liberty of returning you my thanks for 'the protection which you have thereby af- 'forded to myself. As I am an utter stranger 'to the person and character of Mr. Flower, 'and wholly ignorant of the magnitude of his 'offence; I cannot, therefore, with propriety, 'interfere in soliciting a mitigation of punish- 'ment; but if any application should be made 'to the House for that purpose, I will trouble your lordship to say, that the bishop of Landaff, as an individual, will feel much more satisfaction in forgiving the man's malignity, than in avenging it. I have, &c.

'R. LANDAFF.'

"*Lord Grenville's Answer, dated Dropmore, May 14, 1799.*

"'My lord;—I was this morning honoured 'with your lordship's obliging letter. In the 'instance to which it relates, I have only dis- 'charged a public duty; but it was with plea- 'sure that I availed myself of the occasion, to 'express my respect for the character of a per- 'son, whose exertions in the defence of religion 'are, I am persuaded, the real cause of the 'scandalous and unprovoked calumnies against 'him. If any application is made to the House 'in behalf of Mr. Flower, I will not fail to 'obey your lordship's commands. I am, &c.

GRENVILLE.'—Anecdotes of the Life of Bishop Watson, by Himself, vol. 2. p. 89.

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civil bloodshed. The necessity of entering in this Report into a detailed and historical enumeration of the different transactions which are included under this general description, is, however, superseded by the distinct and particular statement of them which is contained in the Report of the Secret Committee of the House of Commons, which has been communicated to your lordships, and referred to your Committee.* The whole of that most important document your Committee beg leave earnestly to recommend to the particular attention of your lordships. They have found it supported throughout by the evidence which has been laid before the Committees of both Houses; and the truth of several of the facts there stated, as well as the authenticity of the sources of information from which they were drawn, have received additional confirmation from circumstances which have been disclosed even since the date of that Report.

In any attempt to trace the outlines and leading features of the system established and acted upon by the disaffected in this kingdom, the first point which claims attention is the indefatigable industry employed for deceiving and misleading the people at large, and particularly the lower classes of the community. To poison the minds of persons of this description with opinions destructive of their own happiness, and inconsistent with the very ends and nature of all government, has always, and in every country, been the principal endeavour of those who are engaged in these conspiracies for promoting the principles of the French revolution. Your Committee deem it almost unnecessary to recall to the recollection of this House to what extent and with what success this measure was first adopted in France. They have seen abundant proof that, for many years past, and down to the present moment, the same means have been unremittedly pursued here by those who have unquestionably had the same objects in view. It would be an endless and most disgusting task to enumerate the almost infinite variety of impious, immoral, and seditious publications with which the press has of late years been loaded, both in Great Britain and in Ireland, and which appear to have in great part (if not wholly) proceeded from the persons engaged in this conspiracy. From this system of attack, nothing has been held sacred. To revile our holy religion, to undermine the foundations of our faith, to subvert every established principle both of political and moral duty, to destroy all sense of allegiance to our sovereign, all attachment to the forms and principles of our happy constitution, to eradicate every sentiment of national character, and to render the people of these realms indifferent both to the dangers and to the successes of their country, have been the invariable objects of these multiplied and continued endeavours.

The zeal with which these doctrines have been disseminated, and the peculiar mode of their circulation, are however deserving of particular attention. They appear to be principally addressed, not to that class of society whose habits might enable them, in some degree, to judge of the tendency of such opinions, but to those whose station and occupations have in great measure debarred them even from that degree of knowledge. With this view, these writings have been printed in numerous editions, and in the cheapest forms; they have even been distributed gratis, and in large quantities; and their circulation among the labouring classes has been a principal occupation of emissaries deputed to various parts of the country from the societies established in this metropolis. The same object has been pursued by inflammatory language, by seditious discourses, by lectures publicly delivered, by tumultuous assemblies convened in the neighbourhood of the capital and of other populous places, and by every other means which appeared best calculated to excite throughout the country a spirit of general hostility to its religion and government, and to delude to the commission of the most atrocious crimes, those whose situation most exposed them to this seduction.

In this close imitation of the beginnings of the French revolution, the advantage which in that country had been derived to the supporters of these principles, from their success in corrupting the soldiery, could not escape the observation of those who, in these kingdoms, were labouring in the same cause. Your Committee have accordingly found, by clear and multiplied proofs, that repeated endeavours have been employed to taint his majesty's fleets and armies, by the introduction of a spirit of insubordination and mutiny, inconsistent with the duty of subjects, and still more with that discipline which is the indispensable foundation of all military service. Wherever in any part of those gallant and meritorious bodies of men any trace of such a spirit has appeared, to this cause it is principally to be ascribed; and it is much more to their loyalty, fidelity, and steady sense of duty, than to any want of industry employed to mislead them, that the ultimate failure of this part of the conspiracy is to be attributed.

Following the same example of the progress and success of the measures employed to promote the cause of the revolution in France, the next object to which the conspirators in these kingdoms appear to have turned their attention was, the formation of popular societies, which, like those established in the earlier periods of the French revolution, might supersede the authority of government, of whatever description, and enable their leaders to assume and exercise, at their discretion, the whole power of the country, civil and military.

* For a Copy of the Commons Report, see p. 579.

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The history of these successive attempts in England, in Scotland, and in Ireland, is so particularly and distinctly detailed in the report of the Secret Committee of the House of Commons, that your Committee deem it unnecessary to repeat it here. They will only remark, that these attempts, followed up as they have been with unremitting activity and perseverance, have successively assumed every shape, and covered themselves under every pretence, which might best elude the vigilance of the king's government, and promote the wicked and dangerous designs which were in the contemplation of the leaders of these societies.

The effects which this most powerful instrument of treason and rebellion is capable of producing, have been but too strongly shown in Ireland, where, under the name of United Irishmen, a very large proportion of the lower class of the people throughout whole districts, counties, and provinces, have been combined into a systematic body leagued against the government, and protected from detection and punishment by the nature of their establishment, by mutual oaths of secrecy, and still more by the general terror which their menaces, crimes, and outrages, have naturally inspired, till, at length, the whole system burst forth into an open rebellion, which is even at this hour rather repressed than subdued.

It is under these circumstances that this establishment of United Irishmen, which has been so injurious to the peace and interest of Ireland, appears to have extended itself to this kingdom, and particularly to the metropolis, where there is always, among the labouring classes a large number of Irish. It has also been closely imitated by the formation (precisely on the same model) of bodies of United Scotsmen and United Britons, which do not however as yet appear to have made such progress in this kingdom as was probably expected by their leaders.

The system of Corresponding Societies which had preceded these, and prepared the way for them in this kingdom, is however scarcely, if at all, less dangerous, and appears to have been carried on, to an extent well deserving the most serious attention of this House. Your Committee have annexed to this report two lists, one extracted from the papers found at different periods in the possession of the secretary of the London Corresponding Society, and at the General Committee room of that society; the other a copy of a paper found in the possession of a member of what was called the Executive Committee of that body. They contain the names of different places in this kingdom with which that society entertained correspondence. Your Committee have reason to believe that even these lists do not include the whole, but they appear to your Committee to furnish ample proof of the necessity of some new and more efficient provision to guard against the danger of such establishments, the extensive influence of which has already been manifested both in France and in Ireland, and can by no means be considered as an object of slight concern in the present state of this country. To this imitation of the course of the proceedings which have led to such fatal consequences in France, your committee find that the disaffected in these kingdoms have added the crime of a treasonable communication and connexion with the enemy at various periods during the present war.

Intelligence of the state of both kingdoms, with a view to the facility and success of invasion, has been repeatedly transmitted to the French government, both from London and from Dublin. The invasion of Ireland was planned in personal intercourse between some of the Irish rebels and the French general charged with the execution of that measure; a resident envoy continued for a considerable time in France, regularly accredited by the body of United Irish. The communications were also maintained by frequent journies of persons who were addressed from the conspirators in Ireland to the members of the societies in this kingdom, and who from hence passed over to the continent. One of these, being apprehended in the very act of procuring his passage for France, was tried and executed here; and it appears that at the time of the arrest of this person, and of Mr. Arthur O'Connor, who was apprehended with him, His majesty's government were in full possession of the knowledge of the treasonable designs which the latter has since confessed.

Your Committee have, however, too much reason to apprehend, that neither the punishment of the offender already mentioned, and of those of his accomplices who have suffered in Ireland, nor the imprisonment of others, has yet stopped the course of this treasonable intercourse with the enemy. It has indeed, appeared to your Committee, that, during the detention of the prisoners who were confined on this account in Dublin, they found the means of keeping up communications with some of their confederates who were still at large: and recent evidence has been furnished to your Committee of the continuance of a treasonable correspondence between the United Irish and the enemy, with the object of encouraging and aiding an invasion of his majesty's kingdom of Ireland.

On the whole result of their examination, your Committee have seen the strongest grounds to be persuaded, that if the dangerous designs of these conspirators have been so far checked and repressed in this kingdom, as to prevent any actual interruption of the public tranquillity, this could only have been effected by the vigilance of his majesty's government, aided by the exercise of those extraordinary and occasional powers which parliament has from time to

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time judged it proper, after the example of their ancestors, to confide to his majesty; and supported by the extraordinary and unprecedented display of zeal, energy, and public spirit, on the part of the great body of his majesty's faithful subjects. So long as these continue, and as the attention of parliament is constantly applied to supply any defects in the means which the existing laws may afford to meet the exigencies of this new and unexampled crisis, they are confident that, under the Divine Providence, no danger is to be apprehended to the laws and happy constitution of this kingdom. But they are on the other hand equally convinced that this object requires a continued and active vigilance; and they feel it their duty to add, that no form of government can, in their opinion, be considered as secure, under which the system of secret societies, such as it is described in the report of the Secret Committee of the House of Commons, and as it has appeared in evidence before them, is permitted to exist.

List of places with which the London Corresponding Society have corresponded, as appears by the Papers found in the possession of their secretary, and at the general committee room at the Queen of Bohemia's Head.—Cradley, Norwich, Sheffield, Manchester, Chester, York, Liverpool, Halifax, St. Albans, Bradford, Coventry, Maidstone, Portsmouth, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, Dundee, Nottingham, Derby, Banbury, Adderbury, Bromley, Leeds, Leicester, Exeter, Deptford, Rochester, Ashton, Trowbridge, Aston, Dudley, Paisley, Helstone, Berwick, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Chevening, Oxford, Wolverhampton, Whitchurch, Cardiff, Gravesend, Loughborough, Stourbridge, Battle, Wakefield, Birmingham, Woodchurch, Kent, Bath, Bristol, Tunbridge Wells, Melbourn, Stockport, Woolwich, Linsfield, Finsbury, Crauley, Cralcy, Ashton-under-Lyne, Framlingham, Garstang, Seven Oaks, Chevinam, Rochdale.

A List of the United Corresponding Societies of Great Britain, in the year 1797, found in the possession of a person some time a member of the Executive Committee. — Portsmouth, Newcastle-under-Line, Salford, Manchester, Sheffield, Norwich, Bradford, Nottingham, Birmingham, Halifax, St. Albans, Exeter, Chester, High-Wycombe, Whitechurch, Leominster, Herefordshire, York, Bath, Bristol, Loughborough, Wolverhampton, Stourbridge, Wakefield, Melbourne, Leicester, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, Dundee, Paisley, Helstone, Berwick, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Oxford, Chevening, Gravesend, Maidstone, Rochester, Chatham, Bromley, Cardiff Woodchurch, Truro, Derby, Litchfield, Redbridge, Leeds, Chichester, Liverpool, Jedburgh, Sunbury, Kilmarnock, Stranraer Rowley, Hull, Grantham, Southampton, Kendal, Wooton, Bromley, Kegworth, Banbury, Adderbury, Tamworth, Stockport, Warrington, Gosport, Ipswich, Philips Norton, Ashton-under-Lyne, Coventry, Tunbridge, Rochdale.

Debate in the Commons on the Sunday Newspapers Suppression Bill.] May 27. Lord *Belgrave* rose to call the attention of the House to a subject, at all times of the greatest importance, but particularly so when in so large a part of the Christian world infidelity was making such successful attacks on religion; he alluded to the infringement on the decent observance of the Lord's day by the circulation of Sunday newspapers. About the year 1780, papers of this description first appeared; but they had not met with much success till within the last year or two, when a paper, called the Observer, had got into considerable circulation. He had for some time looked with anxiety to publications of this nature, and one of the evils he had always apprehended from the unchecked circulation of them was, that they would ere long accumulate on Sunday in the same manner as on other days of the week. An advertisement had lately appeared for the publication of an additional Sunday newspaper, to be called The Volunteer. This paper was looked forward to with expectation; and on this account he was the more anxious to stop it *in limine*, and, together with it, all papers of that description. He thought these newspapers an additional weapon in the hand of infidelity; since one of the constant efforts of infidelity had been to deter Christians from a decent observance of the Lord's day. The law upon this subject was notoriously ineffectual. At present, the sale of articles on a Sunday was contrary to law: there was a penalty of 5*s*. on the sale, and a forfeiture of the article; but the forfeiture, in fact, amounted to nothing, on account of the manner in which it was to be sued for, and the penalty was evidently too small. He should propose to increase the penalty from 5*s*. to 40*s*. If it applied to the whole sale, he would propose 20*l*. on the sale of the article altogether; and in respect to the circulation of these newspapers, he would propose to make it a breach of the peace, and the person found circulating them liable to instant commitment by any magistrate, or peace officer, or churchwarden. He had been told, in palliation of this abuse, that, al-

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though these were called Sunday newspapers, they were printed on the Saturday night: now, whether or no this was the case, the evil was precisely the same; they were intituled Sunday newspapers; they were published, they were circulated, they were read on a Sunday. Independently of the immorality of this practice, he wondered that the taste of the town should be so perverted as to countenance it at all; and that, gorged as it was with news and politics during six days, it should still be desirous of feeding on a summary of the state of politics on the seventh. Was there any advantage, except the gratifying an idle curiosity, to be derived from this practice? None, except a small one to the revenue. What had at all times been the chief cause of the decay and fall of the greatest empires? What, but the pernicious growth of luxury, combined with an inattention to moral and religious duties. He could have wished that the measure had originated with those to whose more immediate care the interests of religion were entrusted; but the evil was of too crying a nature to admit of delay. The noble lord then moved, "That leave be given to bring in a bill for the Suppression of the Sale and Circulation of Newspapers on the Lord's Day."—Leave was given.

May 30. On the motion, that the bill be read a second time on Wednesday,

Mr. *Sheridan* said, that this was an extremely harsh measure, and the House would be wanting in duty to itself and to the subject, if, for no solid reason on earth, it adopted a prohibitory law, which not only sought to fetter the human mind, by denying the means of intellectual exercise, but invaded at every point the property of individuals. From all parts of the country, petitions would be presented against the bill. But the evil complained of by no means originated in the Sunday papers. Papers published in the country on the Monday, but which were necessarily delayed at the press till after the Gazette of Saturday could be received, might be said to occasion much more frequent breaches of the Sabbath than the Sunday papers, which were printed late on Saturday night. If the noble lord would fully attain his object, he must not stop at the Sunday papers. People were naturally curious, and why not read of a battle, a negotiation, of deaths and marriages, as well on a Sunday as on any other day? There was an exception in favour of selling mackarel on the Lord's day; but might not the people think stale news as bad as stale mackarel? Besides, there were a great number who could not read the papers on any other day; and would it be right to conceal from them the situation of the empire at home, and of our affairs abroad? The people had a right to be informed on these subjects, and he could not agree to a bill that would deprive them of all means of information. The noble lord had surely not considered the injury he would be doing to the proprietors of those papers, if his bill passed into a law. He would actually rob an industrious class of men of all their property, without the show of equivalent, and without being able in any one respect to correct the abuse of which he complained. It was new to him to find men, for the sake of piety, stripping the adventurous tradesman of his property. He must decidedly oppose the bill, and would move, that it be read a second time this day two months.

Mr. *Jones* thought it cruel to ruin men by this morality bill, while routs, concerts, &c. were permitted to be kept at the houses of the opulent on the Sunday.

Mr. *Wilberforce*, wished that the people should be afforded the opportunity of innocent recreation, but was far from supposing that the reading of papers on the Sunday was among the means of improving the public morals. The people could only innocently recreate themselves on that day by attending to their religious duties. If the selling of papers should be permitted, then might hundreds of other trades be carried on on the Lord's day. The selling of papers on the Sunday was contrary to law. With respect to the injustice of a measure affecting so much the property of individuals, did the House not know that it was a prohibited trade? So far from these proprietors being entitled to the protection of the House, the fact was, that the proprietors of daily papers had a much better claim, because the law was originally framed partly to secure them against any invasion of their trade by this sort of persons. If the House did not prohibit the abuse, it would become a question whether the institution of the Sabbath was any longer to continue.

Mr. *I. H. Browne* wished the Sabbath to be properly respected, but was not for increasing penal laws. All the country read the papers on Sunday, and he thought

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the reading of them an innocent recreation. He was a friend to newspapers, as he was a friend to every institution whose tendency it was to disseminate political information. If the measure were intended to enforce the existing laws merely, he would support it; but he could by no means agree to any bill that unnecessarily swelled the penal code.

Mr. *Buxton* did not think that the object of the noble lord would be answered by this bill. Papers published on the Sunday were worked off on the Saturday night, and therefore he did not see the same objection to them as the noble lord did. He was sorry to see the Sabbath so ill observed. If it was expected that the lower classes should improve in their morals, the higher should set them a good example. The laws as they stood should be enforced.

The question being put, That the words "Wednesday morning next" stand part of the question, the House divided:

Tellers.

YEAS	Lord Viscount Belgrave Mr. Wilberforce - -	25
NOES	Mr. Sheridan - - - Mr. Jones - - - -	22

So it was resolved in the affirmative. The main question being put, it passed in the negative.

June 11. On the order of the day for the second reading of the bill,

Lord *Belgrave* said, that the objections which had been started against the bill were various. By some it had been said that it went too far; and by others, that it did not go far enough. He would declare it to be his opinion, that no man could exercise his ordinary calling on the Lord's day, according to the laws of the land and the commands of God, excepting only works of charity and necessity. An exception had been made in favour of the selling and buying of milk and mackarel, this, however, was previous to divine service. Could the sale of Sunday newspapers come within the description of works of charity or necessity? The law as it now stood, was directly against the sale of these papers: it imposed a penalty of *5s.* on the sale in the gross. There was also a penalty of the forfeiture of the article in circulation; but these were insufficient penalties. What he proposed was, to make the sale and circulation of Sunday papers a breach of the peace, and to empower churchwardens, constables, &c. to arrest the venders, and take them before the next magistrate, who should have power to confine such persons for any period not exceeding 14 days. This bill went to two points: To the suppression of the sale of these papers, and the prevention of the printing of them on a Sunday morning. With respect to the justice of this measure, as it respected the proprietors, he was glad to find that no petition had appeared against the measure. The printers of this description of newspapers were printers in general; besides which, as they could transfer the printing of their papers from Sunday to Saturday, they would suffer but little injury. He was asked whether it was not an innocent thing which he wished to suppress? In his opinion it was not, since it was contrary to the law of God. There was a large body of men concerned in this trade; he meant the distributors of those papers, many of whom held the practice of publishing Sunday papers in as great abhorrence as himself. Here the noble lord read a letter to this effect from certain distributors, 129 in number, in which they stated that they had formerly signed a petition to the lord mayor and to the bishop of London against this practice. These persons had actually expended *50l.* in instituting prosecutions against the printers, but they had not succeeded in their object, doubtless owing to the inefficacy of the law as it stood. He had heard it objected that the present bill was going too far. But he would ask, whether in the present day, we were not in greater danger of running into infidelity, than of being too strict? It ought not to be forgotten, that we were the near neighbours of a nation, where the very name of a Sunday had been blotted out of the calendar. In Ireland, a Sunday newspaper had been endeavoured to be set up: but the magistrates had prevented it. As to the defalcation which this measure would occasion to the revenue, he had heard it stated at 30,000*l.*; but he did not think the revenue would be a loser, because those who now took in a Sunday paper, would then take in a Saturday, or some other paper; at any rate, the revenue was not to be supported by undermining the goodly fabric of religion. It had been pleaded in extenuation, that the Sunday papers contained sermons, &c.; but so far from this being a recommendation, he considered it as an evil, inasmuch as it in-

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duced people to neglect going to church. Let the fate of the bill be what it might, he should have the consolation to reflect that he had done his duty: he had introduced a practical remedy for a specific evil. It was evident that the ground-work of the French revolution was, their profligacy of manners, their growing disregard for the laws of God, and their neglect and scorn of the day dedicated to his service; and gentlemen would do well to consider, that the demon of Atheism, whose breath was poison, and whose embrace was death had been stretching out his arms from France, with the malignant hope of destroying every country within his reach, and had even partially infected our own shores.

Mr. *Martin* thought, that if persons had not the Sunday papers, they would read worse publications. The papers which were published on Sunday were actually printed on the day preceding: the noble lord ought rather to have made his objection against the Monday papers.

Mr. *Jekyll* was surprised how any member could gravely contend that this was a fit subject for parliament to exercise its functions upon. He trusted that he held no principles which were contrary to sound religion and morality; but when he heard the reading of a Sunday newspaper branded as an act of immorality, and connected with the enormities which accompanied the French revolution, he must tell the noble lord that this practice had no more to do with the French revolution than the fall of Babylon or Rome. The Sunday papers were printed on the Saturday evening, or early on Sunday morning, and published before divine worship began. Who, then, profaned the Sabbath? Was it the reader of such a paper? Was it any more a profanation of the Sabbath, to read a newspaper than another book? But there was the blowing of horns—a great annoyance, this, undoubtedly. But had not the police the power in their hands of suppressing this nuisance? This bill would go to annihilate at a stroke all the property embarked in these papers. If there was now an existing law against such publications, why was it necessary to pass a new law? Was the statute of Charles 2nd insufficient upon this subject? He could not help thinking that half the acts which a man did on a Sunday, were as criminal as the reading of a newspaper. He was sorry to see this kind of gloom intended to be thrown over the Lord's day. Was not conversation between man and man as bad as reading a written or printed paper? But if this was not an immoral act, he could not see why the House should interfere in the business. Considering it as derogatory to the dignity of the House to take up this question, he should move that the word "now" be left out: and instead of this he would move, "that the bill be read a second time on this day three months."

Mr. *Windham* said, he considered the noble lord's motion to be important; that it was of importance for the House to come to a right decision upon it; and that parliament should enforce the right observance of the Sabbath with efficient penalties. This observance ought to be marked by an abstinence from the customs, &c. of ordinary life; on this ground, exhibitions, buying and selling, &c. were forbidden on that day. The Sunday was to be distinguished by an abstinence from smaller acts, and not merely by an abstinence from acts of immorality, as stealing, &c. Some years ago it was proposed to suppress all public houses, &c. where company was received. He for one should have objected to carrying it to this extent, because he would have been unwilling to abridge the happiness and health of multitudes, and confine those to the metropolis, who could not go out upon any other day. But here the case was different. The inducement was different. It was no argument to say there was no positive harm in publishing and reading newspapers on the Sunday. On this ground why not open Astley's and Hughes's Amphitheatres? For his part, he knew nothing immoral in seeing a man standing on his head. But he wished to consider the tendency of a man's destroying the distinction between the Sunday and other days. The noble lord stood here with the law and custom of the country on his side. And for whose interests was it that the House was requested to set aside these laws? With respect to the readers of these papers he would say, "*lassati, nondum satiati.*" It was chiefly to public houses that people resorted who read the Sunday papers. And was this a practice productive of good to morals? The magistrates had endeavoured to shut up public houses; but to this he felt strong objections; a public house was the poor man's coffee-house; man was likewise a

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sociable animal; and therefore he should feel scrupulous about denying him the gratifications of society. But, though he could not go to this extent, he saw no reason to encourage such meetings on Sundays, by the introduction of newspapers into them. Did parliament want to bait the public houses with newspapers? to set up public houses against pulpits, or newspapers against sermons? He thought it was not too much for persons on that sacred day to hear religious instruction in the house of God. But newspapers had now outgrown their name; they had but little allotted in them for foreign intelligence, and were made the vehicle for conveying the instruction of those teachers whom the proprietors of the Sunday papers engaged. Many people took their whole ideas from the instruction they received through the medium of newspapers. But was it fit to commit the morals of the people to newspaper teachers? A comparison had been made between stale news and stale mackarel; but the cases were not parallel: the readers of Sunday weekly papers seldom expected fresh news in them; besides news was not necessary to a man's well-being, as food was. The legislature could not indeed, compel people to attend places of public worship on the Lord's day; but it would do its duty when it held out inducement to good, and refused its sanction to evil. If the House rejected this motion, he was afraid the public would have all sorts of ribaldry and atheism let loose upon them, through the medium of these papers. What could be expected from those teachers of morality and religion, who wrote in these papers, men who were unknown and untaught, but who had acquired a facility in writing? How much better was it to refer the people to public teachers, who were known to be well educated, and were responsible for their principles and conduct. But to the obscure teachers in these public Sunday papers people would run, unless those precautions were taken which might lead them to better principles. Addison, in the Spectator, selected in his Saturday papers, subjects of morality or religion: so did the editors in their Sunday papers; but he could not give the latter credit for their motives: this he considered as a more selfish plan of theirs at first introduced, till such time as they found that their papers were tolerated and better established. The House ought to guard against letting loose this polluted stream upon the public. It was not necessary that persons should read newspapers on a Sunday, and the House ought not to hold out temptations of this sort. The indulgence would contribute to the gratification of a set of idle people, whilst it had a tendency to lead men from that which it was their duty to attend to on that day. An attention to the duties of the Sabbath had been gradually wearing away in this land; and the rejection of this bill he was afraid would be looked upon as a kind of sanction for this criminal relaxation. On all these accounts he should give it his firm support.

The question being put, That the word "now" stand part of the question, the House divided:

Tellers.

Yeas	Lord Viscount Belgrave Mr. Windham - - -	26
Noes	Mr. Jekyll - - - - - Mr. Patten - - - - -	40

So it passed in the negative. The bill was then ordered to be read a second time upon this day three months.

Debate in the Commons on Mr. Palmer's Agreement.] May 31. The House having resolved itself into a committee of the whole House, to consider of the Agreement made between the rlords commissioners of his majesty's treasury and John Palmer, esq. relative to his appointment to be comptroller general of the Post Office, and also of his Conduct in that Employment,

Mr. *Pierrepont* said:—Had this, Sir, been a question of doubt or of difficulty, requiring the assistance of tedious investigation, or of legal argument, I should have been too conscious of my own inability to have had the presumption to propose it; or had it had a reference directly or indirectly to any party question, I should have been one of the last men in the House to have come forward; but considering it as I do, to consist of a few plain and evident propositions, supported by clear and undoubted testimony, and at the same time conceiving it to be a very important question, a question involving in itself the pledge of the public faith to a private individual, I shall intreat your indulgence, while I briefly state the circumstances which I trust will support the resolutions I shall have the honour to propose. It is unnecessary for me to point out the many great advantages

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which this country has derived from the success of Mr. Palmer's plan for the improvement of the Post-office since its first establishment in 1784. This point being admitted, if Mr. Palmer has so materially contributed to the general accommodation of the kingdom, and to the increase of the revenue, ought he not to receive the compensation for which he stipulated, and which was promised him on the part of the commissioners of the Treasury? If my information be correct, he was, on carrying his plans into execution, to receive a patent appointment for life, with a salary of 1,500*l.* a year, and a per-centage upon the nett receipt of the post office exceeding 240,000*l.* a year. On the faith of this, he undertook the reform, and, notwithstanding the many difficulties he had to contend with, had the satisfaction of accomplishing it. He effectually performed his engagements; and when he claims his reward, has the mortification of seeing it withheld from him. The lords of the Treasury signify to Mr. Palmer, in a letter through Mr. Long, that they are of opinion that 3,000*l.* a year for Mr. Palmer's life is a just and full compensation for his services, and that they do not think themselves warranted, on the part of the public, to make any addition to that allowance. I would have admitted, that in this they had acted as wise and provident stewards for the public, had they not been implicated in an express previous contract which I contend they are bound to fulfil. No subsequent act of Mr. Palmer can defeat his right to it, not even those acts of indiscretion which are imputed to him, and on which the Treasury rest their justification. I am very far from approving the correspondence between Mr. Palmer and his deputy; but I think it necessary to state in his favour the testimonies of the postmaster general as far as his personal character is involved. In page 58 of the report, lord Walsingham is asked, "Had you ever any reason to entertain a doubt of the personal integrity of Mr. Palmer?" His answer is, "No, never, in the smallest degree." The same question is put to lord Chesterfield, who says, "he desires to abide by the answer given by lord Walsingham." Nothing, surely, can be more decisive than this testimony to obviate any aspersions that may be thrown upon Mr. Palmer's character: those noble lords knew nothing of Mr. Palmer, nor had any communication with him, but as connected with the Post-office; and they vouch for his perfect and unblemished integrity.—Having made these few preliminary observations, I shall take the liberty of reading the following facts established before the committee, and reported by them in the evidence laid before the House:

Mr. Palmer's contract with government was, that if he should be able to carry his plan into execution, for extending and improving the posts, and for the more safe, expeditious, and regular conveyance of the mails, he was to have for his life 2½ per cent, or the fortieth part only of all the future nett increased revenue of the Post-office; but in case of failure, he was not to receive a shilling for his sacrifices in the neglect of his other concerns, expenses, trouble, &c. &c. It is to be observed, that during the sixty years preceding this agreement, notwithstanding the great increase in the trade and commerce of the country through so long a period, the nett revenue of the Post-office had experienced no increase whatever, except what is derived from an alteration in the postage, and the restriction on franks laid on in 1764-5. On the contrary, for the nine years preceding the adoption of Mr. Palmer's plan, it had decreased 13,198*l.* 13*s.* per annum. So low a per-centage was originally proposed by Mr. Palmer to avoid the possibility of any dispute about the objects from which it might arise, and he always openly professed the great expectations he had formed of the advantage that would accrue to his family from it, if the plan succeeded, and his life was prolonged.

In respect to the mode of payment by per-centage, numerous instances occur of allowing 20, 30, 40, or even 50, none less than 10*l.* per cent for the management of the post-office business, and its revenue, on the gross instead of the nett receipts. The late secretary, Mr. Todd, enjoyed 2½ per cent on the whole gross packet expenditure. Mr. Allen, who, in 1720, made some partial improvements in the cross posts, as a reward for the benefit derived from it to the trade and commerce of the country, was granted a farm of those posts during his life, for above 42 years, and nearly the whole increased revenue to the amount of above 12,000*l.* per annum, which the postmaster general declared to be only "the natural fruits of his own industry and services."

Mr. Palmer having, after some years perseverance against a continued opposition, effected his plan, and never having during the whole of that period, agreeably to his stipulation, received one shilling from government, was then, for the first time, informed, they wished a variation to be made in the plain and specific agreement before mentioned; and it was proposed instead thereof, that he should accept a patent appointment for life under the crown, with a salary of 1,500*l.* per annum and 2½ per cent on all future nett increase of the post-office revenue beyond 240,000*l.*;

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which Mr. Palmer consented to, though it was 750*l.* per annum less than the original agreement. Agreeably to this modification, mutually agreed to by both parties, a draft, of an appointment for life under the crown, was drawn up at the Treasury, and to prevent future obstruction and injury to the public, independent of any control whatever, that Mr. Palmer, might be left to his own judgment in the improvement and conduct of his plan; this, however, did not take effect, because the attorney-general thought a new act of parliament necessary to confirm it. The board of Treasury being unwilling to apply for this act, Mr. Palmer was unable to obtain a completion of this promised appointment, and proceeded in the extension of his plans with the limited authority he was obliged for the present to act with, necessarily depending on the faith and protection of his employers.

The Commissioners of Inquiry, appointed by the House of Commons, report as follows, viz. "The opposition which Mr. Palmer experienced from the oldest and ablest officers in the service, who represented his plan not only to be impracticable, but dangerous to commerce and the revenue, induced us to examine and weigh, with great attention, the numerous documents and informations which have been furnished us by both parties, in opposition to, and in support of the measure; in consequence whereof, we are enabled to state, that Mr. Palmer has exceeded the expectations which he held forth in his first proposal with regard to the dispatch and the expense; at the same time that the revenue is augmented, answers are returned to letters in less than half the time, and with a degree of punctuality never experienced before; the expense is at a less rate per mile than upon the old plan, and has been effected for 20,000*l.* less per annum than the sum first proposed by Mr. Palmer, and the accounts of the Post-office are an undeniable proof of the great increase of its revenue in consequence of his plan.—As an engagement had been entered into, about the year 1720, by the postmaster-general for the time being, with the late Ralph Allen, esq. for farming the cross posts, and which met the approbation of the public, we were induced to inquire into the particulars, by which we found that those improvements were of a limited nature, and that Mr. Allen did not fully disclose his plan or mode of conducting it for above forty years, and that the profits he derived therefrom were very large: whereas the improvements suggested, and already executed by Mr. Palmer, are far more extensive, and of so much importance to the commerce of this country, as to have justified the measure, although it had been accompanied with additional expense; at the same time Mr. Palmer has acted with openness, and without reserve; nor is it probable he will ever reap the benefit Mr. Allen obtained.—We must farther observe, that Mr. Allen met with none of those difficulties that Mr. Palmer has experienced, and which required all his activity and perseverance, aided by the firm and liberal support of government, to surmount, against a most powerful opposition, and every obstruction that could be thrown in his way, by officers of this department." And after going on to state the delay, irregularity, and confusion, that prevailed in the office, previous to the reform, and the beneficial effects arising from various and extensive improvements he had carried into execution, they declare, "Under these circumstances we are of opinion, that Mr. Palmer is justly intitled to the compensation he claims, being a very small part of that revenue which his ingenuity, activity, and zeal, have created, over and above the convenience and numerous collateral advantages which the public, and more particularly the commerce of the country, reap from the safe and speedy conveyance of the mails."

It is presumed the board of Treasury can produce no instance, from their earliest records, of an agreement more cautiously guarded on the part of government, more advantageous to the public, or more completely executed on the part of the individual contracted with. Before the reform, the Post-office revenue, after the progress of near two centuries prior to 1783, did not exceed 150,000*l.* The number of newspapers annually sent from the London office, was less than two millions. A very great annual expense was formerly sustained, both by government and individuals, for expresses, and the number used annually to Bristol alone, to exceed 200. The annual expense incurred in rewards for apprehension, and costs in prosecution for mail robberies, was formerly very considerable; exclusive of loss and inconvenience to individuals, it cost the public several thousand pounds. Since the reform, the annual post revenue, in April 1798, had amounted to above 600,000*l.* Number of newspapers now annually sent by the London office only, above eight millions. Number of expresses to the whole kingdom, both for government and individuals, when last examined did not amount annually to 40. for the whole kingdom. As to expenses for apprehension and prosecution of mail robbers, although the coaches have now travelled above forty million of miles, not a single robbery has been committed, or a passenger insulted. The terms for the conveyance of the mails on the new plan, are 24,000*l.* per annum less than Mr. Palmer originally proposed and contracted for with government, and with a saving of 12,000*l.* per annum in the expenses of their conveyance by the old mode.

Having put the Committee in possession of those facts, I shall entreat their attention to an Opinion given upon a consideration of the whole case:

Mr. Palmer having, by Memorial to the lords commissioners of the Treasury, requested

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performance of the agreement made with him, on the faith of which he undertook the Post-office reform, viz. "That if able to carry his plan into execution, he should have, during his life, 2½ per cent on the future nett increase of the Post-office revenue, but not a shilling otherwise;" and the lords of the Treasury having declined acceding to such request, Mr. Palmer, agreeably to the opinions of his counsel, applied to the House of Commons, requesting an investigation of his claims and conduct; in consequence of which, a committee of that honourable House was appointed, in April 1797, "to consider of the agreement made with Mr. Palmer for the reform and improvement of the Post-office and its revenue, and who were empowered to inquire into the cause of his suspension from the office of surveyor and comptroller-general of the Post-office, and were instructed to report to the House the evidence which should be received by them respecting the several matters referred to their consideration." The committee so appointed have, after an investigation which occupied thirteen days (exclusive of several adjournments for the purpose of receiving farther proof on either side) reported the evidence, which was ordered to be printed, and is left herewith for your perusal.

And your Opinion is now desired, Whether such evidence has established Mr. Palmer's statement as to the agreement made with him, on the faith of which he undertook the Post-office reform; and whether he does not appear to have fully performed such undertaking: and supposing him to have possessed the patent appointment for life, which was made out at the Treasury, and stopped in consequence of legal objections arising from the Post-office act (but if executed would have rendered him independent of the postmaster-general) could any thing now proved against him have afforded sufficient ground to vacate such patent?

Opinion. We have perused the evidence contained in the Report of the committee appointed to consider of the agreement made with Mr. Palmer, for the reform and improvement of the Post-office, &c. and we are of opinion, that by that evidence, the agreement as insisted upon by Mr. Palmer, is proved; by which, as it was originally made, Mr. Palmer would have been entitled to the per centage upon the increase of the then nett revenue of the Post-office; and that by the agreement as after modified, he was entitled to 1,500*l.* a year, and a per centage upon the nett revenue exceeding 240,000*l.* a year. And we are of opinion, that Mr. Palmer has fully performed his part of the agreement, much to the advantage of the public. We are also of opinion, (which indeed it is impossible to doubt) that if a patent had been granted to Mr. Palmer, as originally intended, nothing which has since passed could have deprived him of the benefit of his agreement; because all that is imputed now to Mr. Palmer arises from misunderstandings and disputes between the postmaster-general and him, and which could never have existed if a patent had been granted to him as originally intended, under which he would not have been in any respect dependent on the postmaster-general. We are also of opinion, that though by the appointment which was granted to Mr. Palmer, different from that originally intended, he was made subject to the control of the postmaster-general (because, by the constitution of the Post-office, as established by act of parliament, no patent could be granted to him, by which he was to act independently of the postmaster-general), yet there is nothing in the above-mentioned evidence which ought to deprive him of the benefit of his agreement, nor which would in a court of justice have that effect. It is established by this evidence, that the public derived from Mr. Palmer's exertions all the benefit which he had held forth as likely to accrue from them; and that he acted with diligence, and with perfect integrity in the discharge of his duty. And although we do not approve of the letters written by Mr. Palmer to his deputy, Mr. Bonnor, which are the grounds for depriving Mr. Palmer of the benefit of his agreement, and we do not mean to say that a subordinate officer in any department ought not to behave with respect to his superiors, we think those letters are far from a sufficient ground to deprive him of that benefit. We also think it very doubtful whether a court of judicature would have thought that any attention ought to be paid to those letters, because they were written in confidence to his deputy, and under an impression (though probably ill-founded) that the postmaster-general were unfavourable to him, or from mistake, or misconception, were thwarting him or impeding him in his plan. And we think it appears from evidence, that the deputy who communicated those letters to the postmaster-general, and thus betrayed his private confidential correspondence was himself worthy of no credit, and acted a very blameable part in the transaction with White, as appears from the report. (Signed) J. Mansfield, T. Erskine, V. Gibbs, William Adam. 24th April, 1799.

I shall trouble the committee no farther, only to say, that the private letters which were given in evidence, and which are referred to in the Opinion, although not to be defended upon the principle of correct propriety, can never weigh against an agreement completely executed with so much public advantage, and so far beyond public expectation. As the representative of a populous and manufacturing county, which, in common with the whole kingdom, daily experiences the benefit of Mr. Palmer's plan, I have felt it my duty to bring this business forward;

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and I am confident that, distinguished as we have always been as a nation for our good faith, we shall not permit Mr. Palmer's case to form an exception to the character which we have so uniformly maintained, but that we shall fulfil an agreement to which I contend we are bound by every tie of honour, of justice, and of sound policy.—Mr. Pierrepont then moved the following Resolutions:—1. "That it appears from the report of the committee appointed to take into consideration the agreement made with Mr. Palmer for the reform and improvement of the Post-office and its revenue, that an agreement was made by the chancellor of the exchequer for the proposed improvement and reform, by which Mr. Palmer was to receive a certain fixed per centage on all the produce of the revenue of the Post-office over and above the annual sum of 240,000*l.*—2. That it appears by the said report, that Mr. Palmer has performed his part of the agreement; and that his reform and improvement of the posts have proved highly beneficial to the trade and commerce of the kingdom, as well as to the revenue.—3. Therefore, that Mr. Palmer is justly entitled to the full benefit of his agreement."

Mr. *Long* said, that Mr. Palmer had forfeited his agreement with the commissioners of the Treasury. What formed the ground of that agreement? Was it that Mr. P. was to carry into effect a certain plan, and then to receive a certain reward? Was it not rather that he was to be put into a public office, in order to control the expenditure of the public revenue, and to improve the plan for the more expeditious conveyance of letters? Now, if it should appear that Mr. P. not only connived at, but actually countenanced frauds; if it should appear that he laid a plan to counteract his own, and to cause a later delivery of letters, instead of expediting them, surely he was not entitled to the full extent of the original stipulation. Mr. Long read several letters from Mr. Palmer to Mr. Bonnor, the tendency of which was, to throw the Post-office into "glorious confusion," by causing a late delivery of letters, and to cover that fraud of false and exorbitant bills on the office, which it was his duty to have detected. Mr. P. acted in this matter, not from any sudden impulse of resentment, but systematically. Thus had he failed in his part of the agreement with the public. With regard to the opinion of counsel, it was an opinion not upon any legal question, but upon a measure depending in parliament, an opinion secured by Mr. Palmer, to influence the votes of that House. Mr. P. had recommended the payment of false bills to the contractor of mail coaches, to put in inefficient officers where efficient ones were necessary, and to cause a later delivery of letters. It had been said that Mr. P. did not act upon this advice; but was not a superior giving directions to an inferior, in fact acting upon it? He would acknowledge that Mr. P. had great merit, if not for inventing the plan of the mail coaches, yet for his perseverance in carrying it into execution; at the same time he must maintain that Mr. P. was not entitled to what was now claimed; that he had forfeited all right to a continuance in his office, in consequence of the endeavours he made to throw the Post-office into confusion. Government had allowed him 3,000*l.* a year; and, he would ask whether that was not a fit reward for his merits? When he saw lord Duncan, and other illustrious admirals who had performed the most signal services allowed pensions of 2,000*l.* a year, he could not think Mr. Palmer unhandsomely rewarded.

Mr. *Hobhouse* said, that the question divided itself into two parts: 1, the nature of the agreement; and 2, the conduct of Mr. P. in his official situation. With regard to the agreement made with Mr. P. in 1785, there could be no doubt upon that head; the only question was, whether he had forfeited his right to claim it? As to the merits of his plan, it might be disputed whether or not he had increased the revenue to the degree which had been stated, yet unquestionably his plan had considerably increased the revenue. Great stress had been laid on the impropriety of his letters to his deputy; but no allowance had been made for his feelings, smarting under a sense of injury, and betrayed by Mr. Bonnor, who endeavoured to make him believe that he had been ill-treated by the postmaster-general. He had not, however, acted upon the directions he had given. By the testimony of the postmaster general it appeared, that when the contractor's charge was to be settled, Mr. P. prevailed [illegible] accept of a moderate demand, and [illegible] testimony acknowledged [illegible] conduct, as to integrity, was unimpeachable; it could not therefore be believed, that he was guilty of fraud, or of countenancing fraud.

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With respect to his suggestion to Mr. Bonnor about the late delivery of letters, this evidently was a hasty piece of resentment, not acted upon, it being two years previous to its actually taking place. It had been said, that no injury was done to Mr. P. because a compensation had been granted him; but Mr. P. denies that what he has received has been a compensation to him. With respect to the rewards granted by parliament to lord Duncan and other noble admirals, no parallel could be made, because they had entered into no previous agreement with the public. The case of Mr. P. was a civil case founded on a direct compact, antecedent to the service engaged for being undertaken. The making good the conditions of his bargain, for services allowed to have been performed, was nothing more than a discharge of a debt of justice. Here was a contract, and Mr. Palmer denied that he had received a compensation. The percentage was merely an allowance of one shilling for every forty gained to the public; added to which, Mr. P. had taken all the risk upon himself. A near relation of his own, a banker, had advanced Mr. P. several thousand pounds to carry on the plan. Mr. P. had proceeded in it many years without receiving one shilling from government, and had he failed in the undertaking, the securities he had lodged for the money must have been forfeited. With regard to the opinion of counsel, if it could not fail to carry great weight with it; since it was the explicit opinion of four gentlemen of acknowledged talents and high character, that if a legal mode of establishing the justice of the case had been resorted to, a court of justice would have granted Mr. P. his claim. For his own part, he was confident that the liberality of parliament would not refuse what a court of justice would have granted.

Mr. *W. Dundas* denied that any grant could have been made to Mr. Palmer of an appointment for life independent of the postmaster-general: his claim was now brought forward for what he would have enjoyed had it not been for his own misconduct. Ought not Mr. P. to have fulfilled his part of the agreement; and was it not one part of that agreement that he should accelerate the delivery of letters? But had he not endeavoured to retard the delivery? Had he not been detected in suborning an inferior officer, and that for the purpose of throwing blame on the postmaster-general? With regard to the commissioners of inquiry, their report had been made without having these letters of Mr. P. laid before them. Was the House to be led by the opinion of four counsel feed by Mr. P.? Respectable as these gentlemen individually were, he thought it as nonsensical an opinion as he had ever read. The agreement of Mr P. of an allowance per-centage, was in consideration of his continued activity for the interest of the public. But had he done so? His letters testified against him. He had received 3,000*l.* a year for his useful plan: if he expected more, he would most probably find himself deceived.

Dr. *Laurence* said, he agreed that the written opinions of private counsel, however eminent, ought not to direct the decisions of parliament; at the same time he could not help observing, with concern, that the very persons who objected to those authorities, had on many points argued more like counsel, than members of the committee. They had endeavoured by minute calculations from official documents to lessen what was allowed as merit, and by detached passages of hasty and unguarded language picked here and there from a very free and confidential correspondence, to aggravate, what was imputed as demerit to Mr. Palmer. And such was their apparent disposition to do this, that one hon. gentleman had fallen into a palpable error, that seemed unaccountable. The committee had been told, that during the nine years preceding Mr. Palmer's appointment, although there certainly was, as he had stated in his evidence, a decrease in the nett revenue, of the Post-office, yet, in the gross revenue there was a considerable increase; which, the committee had been also told, was to be attributed solely to the increase of our commerce within that period. Now, that period was nearly the same with the duration of the American war, which stands distinguished in the annals of this country from every other war of any length, by this peculiar circumstance, that never, in any one year of its continuance, did our exports and imports reach the level of the preceding peace; so that, clearly, it was not to the extension of our commerce, during these nine years, that any augmentation, if any actually existed, in the receipts of the post-office, could be fairly attributed. The probable cause was the greater intercourse, and increased facility of communication within the kingdom, which it was the excellence of Mr.

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Palmer's plan to have systematically improved, and carried to perfection in the department, which he undertook to regulate and reform. But it was unnecessary to answer arguments of this kind in detail. The lords of the Treasury had precluded them all, when, considering themselves as bound by no public faith, and having the whole of Mr. Palmer's conduct before them, they had ranked him among the greatest benefactors of his country; for the reward, which they had ultimately advised their sovereign to bestow upon him, was equal to the grant, with which the public munificence usually remunerated the most splendid achievements of those, whose victories had brought safety, or glory to the state.

The conduct of that board, in referring as it were, the question to the House, Dr. L. thought agreeable to their public duty. They found an officer in one of the revenue departments suspended by his lawful superiors; and that suspension, they judged it necessary not only to confirm, but to follow with a dismission. According to the letters of the commission under which he held his place, his emoluments ceased with his official situation. Combining all these circumstances, they might not regard it as consistent with their limited, delegated and responsible power over the public purse, to hear of a secret understanding and tacit construction, by which, contrary to the expression of the instrument itself, a considerable charge was to be entailed on the nation. They satisfied themselves therefore with handsomely paying what had actually been done; yet at the same time they consented that the whole claim in its fullest extent, should be submitted to the investigation of that House, to which alone it belonged in such cases, to exercise an equitable and wise generosity with the money of the people. Sitting in that committee, even they who had before concurred in the grant already made to Mr. Palmer, were in no degree bound by their former decision; much less ought that decision to influence the judgment of others. The true question was, whether taking the whole evidence into consideration, the spirit and essence of the original agreement, and not the mere words of the subsequent commission, were or were not binding in favour of Mr. Palmer? He did not mean binding with the force of a legal obligation; then the inquiry of that House would have been superfluous; but binding on the equity, the honour, and liberality of the public.

The hon. gentleman who had last spoken, had very dexterously professed to pass over every thing anterior to what he had called the modified agreement of 1789. He could by no means agree to this mode of viewing the subject. But there was one point which was settled by that modified agreement beyond all dispute. It ascertained with precision the extent of the reward which Mr. Palmer was to receive. It clearly fixed the nature of the augmentation from which he was to derive his per-centage. He was to derive it from every augmentation over and above the sum of 240,000*l.* unless where the difference arose from any additional rates of postage, which parliament might impose, or from any diminution which new regulations might effect in the packet establishment. These two were the only exceptions expressed; and the introduction of these operated still more powerfully to the exclusion of all others, than if no exception whatever had appeared on the face of the instrument; since these irrefragably demonstrated, that all the various possible sources of future increase to the revenue were not overlooked when Mr. Palmer's appointment was framed. To what purpose, then, served official documents, speculations, and conjectures intended to show other causes of prosperity in the income of the Post-office than the excellence of Mr. Palmer's reforms? One purpose only could be served by them; that of confusing and misleading the committee. But the use that had been made of that instrument by the hon. gentleman who had thought it decisive of the tenure on which Mr. Palmer held his emoluments, was the last use, Dr. L. said, which he would consent to make of it. If the letter of Mr. Palmer's appointment in 1789 was conclusive, where had been the necessity of a long inquiry? Why had a committee been appointed "to consider of the agreement made with Mr. Palmer for the reform and improvement of the post-office?" Why had that committee produced a bulky report? And why was a committee of the whole House, now sitting on that report? the commission of 1789, would have spoken for itself in a single line—in three words. He should therefore think himself at liberty to ascend much higher, and should wish to refer the committee to another com-

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mission, never executed indeed, but proved in evidence to have been prepared some time in the year 1785.

It had been intimated, that the draft in question could not now be found in the Treasury, that it was, therefore, a paper of doubtful authenticity; probably drawn up by some friend of Mr. Palmer; a mere project submitted to, but never approved by government. This, however, was not agreeable to the evidence before the committee. Some intended appointment or other, to the very same effect, is repeatedly mentioned about the time, in the negociation which took place between Mr. Palmer and the chancellor of the exchequer, through the mediation of the present lord Camden. Above all, the draft of the commission itself was produced to the postmaster-general by Mr. Palmer, when, in 1790, he had some dissentions with the noble lords who filled that office. Upon that he stood, as the real tenure of his situation. Fortified with that, he threatened them with a reference to the chancellor of the exchequer. Could he, could any man in his senses have so acted, if he were conscious that the production of that very instrument would have ruined his whole cause with the judge whom he had chosen? Indeed, the chancellor of the exchequer himself has admitted that he "rather believes the draft to have been prepared at the Treasury, or by directions from thence, and from thence communicated to the attorney-general." What then was the language of that original draft? It was distinctly "for life." Lord Camden, too, represented it at the time, as the opinion entertained by the chancellor of the exchequer himself that the appointment ought to be such as to secure Mr. Palmer against any change of administration. Could it then be supposed, that he was not to be secured against that very minister who wished him to be secured against all? That minister had himself fairly stated, that according to the outline of the original terms, "Mr. Palmer was to have an appointment for life."

But all this, it was maintained, Mr. Palmer himself, in 1789, had voluntarily abandoned. Now, what could have induced him so to relinquish at once what he had so long and so earnestly pressed in all his early negotiations with government! How was he situated at the date of what is called the modified agreement? Did he lie under any temptation to accept less than he had always solicited? Does that agreement contain any compensation for that which it is said to have taken away? Nothing of all this. When Mr. Palmer first undertook the execution of his own plan, he was opposed by all the authority and information of the Post-office. Volume was added to volume, folio to folio, of objection upon objection, to prove the whole scheme impracticable in all its parts. He defended himself as he could in this paper-war, and he triumphed in the experiments which he instantly made on some of the principal roads, at his own immediate expense, at his own ultimate hazard. He gave up his own private concerns, by no means inconsiderable; he dedicated himself wholly to the public service in which he had engaged; he urged it forward with an activity and perseverance, which had been said by one hon. gentleman, with a great degree of truth, to have formed a principal part of his merit. His plan gradually developed itself in practice. Still he was thwarted by the officers of the old establishment, who, when they could not openly resist, secretly threw every little obstacle in the way of his progress. But every new difficulty which he had to surmount, gave additional merit to Mr. Palmer's success. He had surmounted them all; he had firmly and immoveably established his plan; the commissioners of public inquiry had reported in its favour; the revenue of the state had felt its beneficial effects; it had risen much above the mark where his per-centage was to commence; he had already earned the reward for which he had stipulated; when, as the committee was now desired to believe, he all at once, without any assignable reason, knowingly and intentionally, consented to accept, instead of a per-centage for life, the very same rate of emolument dependent on the pleasure of the postmaster-general; on the pleasure of persons, who from the first had been unfavourable to all his views, and with whom he had been in a perpetual contest. Was it possible to believe this? Could it be explained upon any known system of human action? Did he gain in power and patronage what he sacrificed in the security of his income? No; the very reverse. He says, and in that he is confirmed by the chancellor of the exchequer, that the original commission fixing his profits for life, and making him independent of the postmaster-ge-

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neral, was only laid aside because such a separate appointment was thought incompatible with the existing law. Had not that legal objection occurred, not to the nature of the reward which he was to receive, but of the powers which he was to exercise, that would have been done which he wished, and to which the minister intended to accede. When it was found that his commission could not be made out from the Treasury, but that it must come from the postmaster-general alone, it was a necessary consequence that the compensation for his services should also be derived to him through the same channel. But he constantly regarded this as the form only, not the essence of his appointment. He always believed the real and true interpretation both of his authority and of his emoluments, to be, in effect, the same as under the original agreement. This was clearly no after-thought on his part. While the transaction was fresh, the very year after his appointment, when the misunderstandings between him and the postmaster seem to have reached a higher pitch than at any other period since the first trial of his scheme; when he held forth, almost in a tone of menace, an immediate application for the accustomed support of the minister, it was upon this declared ground, that although he was nominally under the post-master, he was virtually under the Treasury. The manner in which his appointment was made out, he asserted to be but a matter of present necessity. And upon this occasion it was, that, to show the genuine nature of his employ, he produced the unexecuted draft of the original warrant. Nothing, then, could be more manifest, than that Mr. Palmer never contemplated the commission which he took in 1789, as any modification whatever of the original agreement: nothing could be more improbable than that the chancellor of the exchequer could have designed it as such a modification, when an objection raised not by himself, but by the attorney-general alone, prevented him from ratifying with all the binding efficacy of a patent, the original proposals of Mr. Palmer in their fullest extent. If then the equity, the honour, the liberality of the public ought to look to the fair intention and spirit of the agreement, could there be a doubt but that Mr. Palmer ought to stand on as advantageous a footing as if the patent-office once proposed for him had been actually signed and sealed?

But even a patent office, it would perhaps be said, might be in some cases vacated. Incontrovertibly it might. But what were those cases? And was the present one of the number? He had understood from men of eminence in that profession, which was more immediately conversant than his own, in the construction of instruments, that there were two grounds only of setting aside a patent: one was corruption in the discharge of the duties annexed to the office; the other was more generally, any gross misbehaviour attended with actual injury to the service. Of corruption Mr. Palmer was not accused. Both the noblemen, who filled the situation of postmaster-general bore positive testimony to his personal integrity. But one fact of his own conduct spoke more strongly in his behalf, than could any testimony of opinions, however respectable. He had actually effected his projected reforms for 20,000*l.* a year less than his own estimate, 20,000*l.* a year less than the sum with which government on the part of the public was willing to purchase the benefits of his plan. Had he been a corrupt man, here was a fund, from which, by connivance and collusion, from which, by such a participation in the contracts as official men had sometimes been supposed to enjoy, he might safely have drawn to himself secret profits much beyond all that can ever accrue from the allowance which he claims. But he resisted, and broke the combination of contractors against him; he sought and he discovered one, who speculated more sanguinely or more correctly, by whose means he was able to reduce the charge of mere conveyance much below his public promises, below even his own private expectations. The name of this man was Wilson.—Now, after this, could the committee pause a single moment on the charge, which was intimated against Mr. Palmer, of showing too much partiality to this man? It was urged against him, that he favoured this man in getting some accounts passed, which he had himself pronounced to be extravagant. But these accounts all together were for no very large sum: it could not be surmised that Mr. Palmer had any concealed interest in them; he had not even the indirect interest of reputation seeking to cover any extravagance of his own. The simple truth, according to the evidence, was

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this: lord Waslingham stimulated by a laudable zeal for his majesty's accommodation during one of the royal visits to Weymouth, had given to Wilson in the absence of Mr. Palmer, rather improvident orders without any limitation of expense; and with an intimation, that no expense would be scrupled. An undue advantage, in Mr. Palmer's judgment, was made of this accidental opportunity. But what could he do? In this difficult situation he stood. If he suffered the man to be publicly discredited and disgraced, he feared that he might be thrown back into the hands of the combination, which that very man had been his principal instrument to break, and the public service suffer more beyond all comparison, than by any loss in a single and occasional expired contract; a contract too, which had not been made by him, but by the postmaster-general. On the other hand, he thought, that the success of such charges might produce consequences, injurious to the terms of the standing contracts, in which he was more immediately concerned. He did, therefore, after much hesitation, advise lord Walsingham to pass the accounts, while he at the same time privately reprimanded Wilson. He did more. He required and obtained an abatement in one heavy article; and the next year made a contract for the same service at less than half the price; at a rate, such in economy, as no subsequent instance has approached.

Another charge imputed to him that he had improperly favoured Mr. White, one of his clerks, in passing vouchers, which he must have known to be fictitious. The sum altogether was little more than 300*l*., part of an issue of 1200*l*., for the rest of which it did not appear but that White had regularly accounted. It was a bill for travelling expenses, incurred in the business of the office during a period of four years, though it was said, that in the first of those years the journeys which this clerk had made were few and insignificant. Was this any very enormous charge during such a period? Certainly not. Had he really expended that money in travelling on the public service? There is no pretence set up to the contrary. There were indeed genuine vouchers for nearly one third of the demand; but in some instances he had not kept a regular account, in others he had mislaid or lost his papers. Would it have been much to have allowed a demand of such a nature and to such an amount for four years, without any vouchers? At most, a part only of the deficiency could have fallen on Mr. Palmer, in any event. And could he be suspected of intentionally encouraging a fraud, to protect himself from the contingent loss of so small a sum?

Dr. L. said, he did not find it established at all to his conviction, that Mr. Palmer was directly implicated in the fabrication of these accounts. From the confidential letters of Mr. Palmer to Mr. Bonnor, a short extract of not quite two lines had been read, very vague and general. Beyond this what was there? Mr. Bartlett knew nothing. Mr. Harraden, whom Mr. Bonnor had vouched, knew nothing, and had not even heard any thing from White to this purpose. Setting aside the contrary assertions of the late comptroller-general and his late deputy, there remained only White himself; and he referred the order, under which the account was made up, immediately to the deputy: the whole, he says, was entirely done under the direction of the deputy; he only supposes that there must have been an order from the comptroller-general to warrant the conduct of the deputy. To both these representations he adheres under all the pressure of a long and rigorous examination. What then said the affidavit which he had made soon after the suspension of the comptroller-general? In the only interview between him and White, which was there distinctly related, the former goes not one syllable farther than to ask the latter "whether he could not recollect any fair articles of expense which he had omitted to charge?" Was this criminal? Was this in any degree improper? Beyond this, all was thrown into the convenient ambiguity of a narrative, which twice ostentatiously mentions the order of the comptroller-general for White to attend the superintendent of the mails, without discriminating whether the order was given personally, or through the deputy, as White now declared that it was; and which subjoins the purpose of that attendance, without indicating whether that purpose were so expressed in the order itself, or whether the addition be no more than the explanation of the deponent himself; though from the variation of the language in the two passages where it occurs, it can only be of the latter description. Was that affidavit, truly speak-

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ing, voluntary, as it purports to be? It was not. By whom was it suggested? By Mr. Bonnor.

For his own part, he could not persuade himself that they who opposed Mr. Palmer's claims, could be serious in the two charges which he had thus examined. The remaining accusation was of a nature which, if the crime were fully substantiated against Mr. Palmer, would come nearest to the exigency of that case which justice would require, to work a forfeiture of his agreement, in whatever manner secured. It was imputed to him, that he had systematically thrown the office into confusion to the detriment of the public service; that he had himself created that delay in the delivery of letters which had occasioned the public meeting of the merchants of London in 1792, just before his suspension. The proof of his offence in this respect was attempted to be drawn from his confidential correspondence with his deputy. Whatever epithet might belong to the conduct which had produced such papers, entrusted without reserve in the sacred faith of friendship, yet, having been acknowledged by the writer, they were to be credited against him. At the same time, every just and equitable principle of construction demanded that they should be favourably interpreted. A sudden impulse of irritation, an unguarded phrase of whatever kind, in the negligent security of familiar communication, ought to be carefully distinguished from premeditated declarations of cool and settled design; otherwise all the amiable ease of social intercourse must shrink and contract itself into caution, restraint, jealousy, and distrust. It must be remembered too, that one letter often echoes the sentiments or the passions of another. But here were wanting all the letters of Mr. Bonnor, whom in almost every instance before the committee, Mr. Palmer had answered. It was impossible to know how far what seemed to come from the latter had been in reality suggested by the former. It could not be perceived what had been the representations, and what the arguments of the deputy, which for the instant may have warped the natural judgment of his superior, then at a distance, from more correct information. It had been observed, that these letters were by no means of one single period. It was true, there would be found dates of three different years. The committee, then, had not an accidental fragment of a correspondence, but a choice selection from materials studiously preserved, and brought forward with a disposition to suppress nothing that could injure Mr. Palmer. If, in the whole course of his connexion with the office, he had ever been betrayed into a single indiscretion beyond what appeared, there was every reason to believe that it would have been blazoned to the public. If these letters were not sufficient for his condemnation, nothing yet undiscovered could be presumed, nothing conjectured, nothing suspected, nothing imagined to his prejudice. The only letter of the year 1788 related to the affair of Wilson. It did not apply to the present purpose, unless perhaps it might be thought to contain something a little indecorously ludicrous in the mode which the comptroller general there points out for teaching men of high rank and high situation, that if they descend into the details which properly belong to subordinate officers, they will be in perpetual danger of losing their way in a strange country, of which they neither know the land-marks, nor understand the language to enquire their road. The result of the solitary letter, in 1789, was to forbid what seems to have been suggested by the deputy, and to prevent mischief. So far that could not tend to criminate the late comptroller-general. But it might be said, that he here suffered a principle of action to escape him, which he afterwards carried into practice. What then was that principle? It was neither more nor less than this, that he might not have disliked such a total confusion as would have forced on a complete enquiry into the state of the office, and led immediately to some radical and effectual regulation. He thought that a separate and independent authority was necessary to the purposes of his appointment, and he hoped in this manner to obtain it on a full investigation of all complaints. There was not a more common, because there was not a more plausible—there was not a more successful fallacy, by which men were seduced into errors or crimes, than the slippery maxim, that the end sanctifies the means. Eager and ardent minds, in proportion as the object which they had at heart was fair and laudable, were impatient of every obstacle, attempted every path, and the impediment which they were unable by open force to overcome, they endeavoured secretly to sap and undermine. In this light it was that he saw the inclinations, he would say, rather than

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the conduct of Mr. Palmer, during that period, to which all the rest of the letters applied. They were all written in the autumn of 1790. And what was then the state of the office? During a short absence of the comptroller-general there had been, as he stated in a solemn remonstrance to the postmaster-general, a wanton interference threatening him, and insulting and disgracing valuable officers for their known attachment to him. He had written, that he hoped on his arrival to adjust every thing satisfactorily; but a peremptory decision was immediately passed unfavourable to him; the orders of former postmasters general, subjecting all the officers of the kingdom to his authority were contradicted, and papers sent to invite complaint and opposition against his regulations. So at least had the measures of his superiors been represented to him by his deputy. And in what manner did he act? Did he aim by clandestine managements alone to defeat this interference? No. He avowed his sense of this usage. He boldly and strongly urged his grievances. He insisted on a reference to the arbitration and award of the minister. At the same time he did, it could not be denied, in one letter intimate to his deputy a desire that he should not enforce the discipline of one particular department, in which the postmaster had chiefly intermeddled. But was this malignantly done? Quite otherwise. Even when he thought the conduct of the postmaster general what he most could wish, he could not help expressing, confidentially, his regret at the revival of old quarrels and old feelings; and he found a consolation only in the reflection, that, notwithstanding the confusion which had been introduced, the business would be effectually done; that it could not be undone by any mismanagement of others. But did any mischievous consequence ensue from the hint to his deputy? No. Was there any public complaint of the lateness of the delivery at that time? None appears. Did the delivery actually fall back? There is no trace of it in the evidence. One thing above all is clear, that these letters of the comptroller-general to his deputy did not occasion that lateness in the delivery which afterwards attracted the attention of the public; the charge which the correspondence was originally brought to support. The dates alone are conclusive. There was an interval of considerably more than a year; and the official documents which have been produced on the contrary side demonstrate the real cause which gave rise to that complaint of the merchants, in the beginning of 1792. It was the introduction of a new check in the office, which was the sole act of the deputy, without the sanction of the comptroller, as without the knowledge of the postmaster general: a proper check if expedition had not been too much sacrificed to accuracy; but on which it was on all hands admitted that it did actually occasion a considerable loss of time. The committee was now, on a consideration of all these circumstances, to hold up an example which might one way or other be attended with consequences of no trivial magnitude. If the decision should be unfavourable to a claim of such acknowledged merit, he feared that men of talents who might hereafter be willing to employ their genius and their industry in the service of the public, would discover only in the proceedings of that night, that Mr. Palmer had one fault greater than any which had been pressed against him—a fault of an over hasty and improvident zeal to do, without regard to his own interest, whatever good it was in his power to do to his country.

The *Solicitor General* said, that he always understood when a man insisted upon the exact performance of a covenant, it was incumbent upon him to show that he had performed his part of the contract. He would ask gentlemen, whether, in their opinion, Mr. Palmer was a fit person to be reinstated in his situation of comptroller-general of the post-office, and if they were not of opinion that he ought, from what did that impression arise but from his letters, and the conduct of Mr. Palmer? Could they for a moment have confidence in the man who could write those letters? It was also in evidence, that Mr. Palmer was a man inpatient of control, and so desirous of getting rid of the authority of the postmaster-general, that he forgot the duty which he owed to his superior officer. But supposing the treasury had made an improvident bargain, would that House force them to perform it? It was like the case of buying a horse at a farthing a nail, and doubling it, which was in law an improvident contract, and not good. Though Mr. Palmer, from his conduct was no longer fit to remain comptroller of the Post-office, yet they acknowledged, his merits in other respects, and he had

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accordingly received 3,000*l.* per annum, as a compensation; and in his opinion he must make out a much stronger case before he persuaded the House to allow him a larger reward.

Lord *Sheffield* said, that the question was, whether ministers had entered into an agreement with Mr. Palmer, and whether Mr. Palmer had fulfilled his engagements? All agreements, especially of the kind in question, should be strictly observed. No man doubted the great advantage derived from the plan, and perhaps a better bargain had seldom been made for the public. The integrity of Mr. Palmer was not impeached, and as he had executed his plan, even beyond expectation, no wrangles in the Post-office department should be suffered to deprive him of his promised reward; and it was the duty of parliament to enforce the fulfilment of agreements made for the public benefit.

The *Attorney General* said, he must divest himself of his professional character, and speak only as a member of that House, upon the subject of the counsels opinion. When that paper was sent to him, he was led to inquire with what view it could be so sent; nor could he conceive with what view it could be supposed by his learned friends who signed it to be taken, unless for the purpose of influencing the House. He was sure it must have been obtained by surprise from them, as one of them, Mr. Adam, had been long a member of that House, and a more correct man never lived. He was sure that learned gentleman would never have signed a paper which he supposed was laid before him, in order to influence his vote in parliament. Another of the learned gentlemen was actually a member; but he did not see him in his place when any subject had a right to call for his opinion. With respect to the question proposed to them, whether the evidence substantiated Mr. Palmer's agreement? In their answer they paid no great compliment to the then attorney-general. It was supposing that he would have drawn a patent or a bill, in which Mr. Palmer would have been secured his emolument, and no clauses or restrictions added by which the country would have been secured that he should have performed his duty in return. Then let the House next consider, whether his conduct had not been such, as would have warranted an attorney-general to have moved a *scire facias* for the repeal of his patent; and this he took to be the true state of the question. Gentlemen sometimes gave very indulgent opinions, and it seemed to be so here; for he defied any man to say it was borne out by the evidence. They doubted that the letters were evidence, because they were improperly given up; but surely, when government were in possession of the facts they communicated, they were justified in acting upon them. The learned gentleman then read extracts from the correspondence, from which he contended that Mr. Palmer had been justly dismissed. He was willing to admit, that the communication might have been made wrongfully, but how did it become government to act when they were in possession of the information? The question then was whether the remuneration given to Mr. Palmer was adequate for the service he had performed? After a consideration of the evidence, he could not help declaring his opinion, that it was adequate.

Mr. *Jekyll* said, it was agreed on all sides that a specific contract had been entered into between the Treasury and Mr. Palmer —a contract that would have been moulded into a patent, had not the act of parliament, regulating the Post-office department, stood in the way of its completion. Had it been so moulded, was there any lawyer who would assert that such a patent could be vacated on the grounds disclosed by the report? He would contend that a patent-office could not in point of law, be vacated, unless it should appear, that there had been corruption in the discharge of the duty, or gross misconduct. The postmasters-general negatived the first point by positive evidence. The letters to Bonnor are resorted to, in order to make out a charge of embarrassing the Post-office. Now, it appears, by the Report, that the very embarrassment complained of, was the blunder or machination of Mr. Bonnor himself, without the privity of Mr. Palmer, who removed the check imposed by his deputy, and instantly restored the expedition of the delivery. A more wise or beneficial contract was never entered into on the part of government. Of the incomparable utility of the plan, it was needless to pronounce a panegyric. At the commencement of Mr. Palmer's operations, the minister held out all possible protection to free him from that dependency on the postmasters-general, which shackled and confined them. But that species of official interference soon became inefficacious.

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Mr. Palmer had the mortification to feel every effort towards the completion of his system, paralized by the postmasters-general. He attempted indirectly what he could not do directly: to do a great right, he did a little wrong. He found his situation rendered distressful, and nearly abortive. Yet even then, whatever transient speculations escaped him, they were never reduced to action; and inactive speculations could not be the ground of vacating a patent, or annihilating a specific agreement. The faith of government was pledged by the act of the Treasury, and Mr. Palmer had as intrinsic a right to the profits of his contract as the fund-holder to his dividend on the 3 per cents.

The *Speaker* said, that the question divided itself into two parts: 1st, whether or not there was any specific agreement; and 2nd, whether it was merely in remuneration of past services, or whether it had not also a prospective consideration, and if that reward had not been forfeited by subsequent conduct? It was admitted that the agreement had not legal validity, and, therefore, must rest upon the good faith of the Treasury. In every contract, the party, to perform his part, must act with diligence, fidelity, and integrity. He would never underrate the merits of Mr. Palmer; but the question was, whether he had received his recompense for future performances; whether he had performed those duties faithfully and diligently; or whether he had not forfeited his future salary from his misconduct? Here he was grieved to say, that the report abundantly confirmed that fact. At the same time he must do Mr. Palmer the justice to declare, that he had not acted from corrupt motives; he seemed to be a melancholy instance of a man's going unwarrantable lengths to obtain a favourite object. It had been said, that nothing had been actually done, and that the whole of his misconduct was confined to his letters; but the Report proved, that the delivery of letters had been retarded, and that the wish of Mr. Palmer had in part been carried into effect. It was his opinion, that government, with such facts staring them in the face, would act culpably if they over-looked them.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, he did not blame the minister for his wish on this occasion to save the public money; but surely Mr. Palmer was not to be condemned, if he appealed against a pension at will, given to him in lieu of a positive stipulation; and if he keenly felt, that, after sacrificing so large a portion of his life to the public service, there was now a possibility that his family might be left destitute. The hon. gentleman who had talked so freely of the nonsensical opinion of the lawyers consulted, did not seem to know that the publication of their opinions was a practice the most common. Every man who paid for an opinion had of course a right to publish it. The attorney-general had gone rather farther in his cavalier treatment of the opinions of those gentlemen. He seemed to treat them, not as completely serious, but as emanating from a sort of good-natured indulgence towards their client. This was to trifle with the House, and to libel those most respectable gentlemen. Mr. Sheridan then proceeded to state the merits of Mr. Palmer's plan, and to show how little probable it was that any other man would have effected its completion. He had been thwarted by the old establishment at every step, and his mind was irritated by their constant opposition. It was said on his success, that the revenue had been raised by other means, when in fact, had it not been for Mr. Palmer, an additional duty could not have been raised. It appeared strange to him that the main point on this occasion had been slurred over, and this was, whether there existed or not an original contract for giving to Mr. Palmer an independant power? If it was so, and if this contract was obstructed by the act of queen Anne, it was the duty of ministers to have provided a remedy by a short act of parliament. They must have known, that, without a due control, he could not accomplish the proposed reform. They were aware of the abuses which prevailed when that gentleman first entered the Post-office. When he made his contract he supposed that he should have full powers to do away those abuses, but he found himself powerless, and his enemies in full power. It was under this impression that he had made use of the language on which the right hon. the Speaker had commented. He knew "that he could bring those persons to shame;" but he also feared that he should fall himself in the conflict. He felt that he lay then at the mercy of the present or of any future minister, though it would have been the height of injustice to deprive him of his emoluments, unless misconduct had been proved. Where was, then, the miscon-

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duct? Was it in his letters? No. He was dismissed because he would not return a key to his suspended deputy without a proper order. Even after this the public faith had been kept with him; and for nearly a twelvemonth he regularly received his per-centage. After this time also, the testimony of the lords postmasters, who dismissed Mr. Bonnor, stated, "that Mr. Palmer was highly deserving of his per-centage, and that the public faith was pledged to him for its payment." What cause could therefore be assigned for the proceedings against Mr. Palmer? Was it the refusal of the key? That could never be gravely urged. Was it the affidavit of White, that false accounts had been forged, by order of Mr. Palmer? No. That man had admitted that he only supposed that the matter could not have been done without the consent of Mr. Palmer, and that the affidavit, in making which he thus perjured himself, had been drawn up by Bonnor. The charge of a late delivery, and of creating a confusion in the office, amounted only to this; that Mr. Palmer had ordered a new cheque, which, in the first instance embarrassed the parties concerned, but, in the end, was highly beneficial. He was of opinion, that nothing had been shown of sufficient force to do away the contract, and that after so much of meritorious exertion, Mr. Palmer should not be left in a state of precarious dependence.

Mr. *Pitt* said, it was far from his wish to speak harshly on the present occasion, but he could not but remark on the pains which had been taken to extenuate a positive degree of malversation, and to take away its proper check and control from the executive government. He was actuated by no prejudice on this occasion: he acknowledged the utility of Mr. Palmer's plans, and had supported them until they were completely established. The advantages arising from them to the revenue had been exaggerated: the great merit of the plan rested on the accommodation which it gave to the public. His opinion remained the same with respect to the original agreement; which was, that the pension and per centage were fairly due by that agreement; but that the latter was payable only as long as the duties of the office were performed. If, instead of a patent, encumbered with a condition, this had been a simple grant, would not the latter have been voided by the subsequent conduct of the applicant?—He should have no objection to meet the four counsel whose opinion had been quoted on this head. He should wish to ask them whether, in case of misfeazance, the letters patent, had they actually passed, might not have been repealed by a *scire facias*. The right hon. gentleman then proceeded to remark on the acts of Mr. Palmer, which retarded the communication of letters, and aimed to throw the office into confusion, for the purpose of casting the blame upon his principals. If the House interfered on such an occasion, all checks on the part of the executive would be done away. The grant to Mr. Palmer was of a twofold nature, it was partly a reward for past services, and partly an incentive to future exertion. If he had been guilty of errors which led to his dismissal, his claim to prospective remuneration was completely done away. It might be questioned, therefore, whether the liberality of government, in making the present allowance to Mr. Palmer, did not amount to profusion. But they had considered the important merits of that gentleman. They had adhered to the spirit, though they could not comply with the letter of the agreement; and had given him his pension, with the per-centage on the average of three years previous to his dismissal; and for this he had received the thanks of that very Mr. Palmer who now stood forward to complain. On the whole, he was of opinion, that Mr. Palmer's case had not been made out, and he should therefore move, "That the chairman do now leave the chair."

The question being put, that the chairman do now leave the chair, the committee divided: Ayes, 112; Noes, 28.

The King's Message respecting a Subsidy to Russia.] June 6. Mr. Secretary Dundas presented the following Message from his Majesty:

"GEORGE *R.*

"His Majesty thinks proper to acquaint this House, that he had, some time since, concluded an eventual engagement with his good brother and ally the emperor of Russia, for employing 45,000 men against the common enemy, in such manner as the state of affairs in Europe at that period appeared to render most advantageous. The change of circumstances which has since arisen having rendered a different application of that force more desirable, his majesty has recently had the satisfaction to learn that the views of the

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emperor of Russia, in that respect, are entirely conformable to his own. But his majesty has not yet received any account that the formal engagements to that effect have been regularly concluded: he has, however, the satisfaction of knowing that the same promptitude and zeal in support of the common cause, which his ally has already manifested in a manner so honourable to himself, and so signally beneficial to Europe, have induced him already to put this army in motion towards the place of its destination, as now settled by mutual consent. His majesty therefore thinks it right to acquaint the House of Commons that the pecuniary conditions of this treaty will oblige his majesty to pay the sum of 225,000*l.* in stipulated instalments, as preparation money, and to pay a monthly subsidy of 75,000*l.*, as well as to engage for a farther payment at the rate of 37,500*l.* per month, which payment is not to take place till after the conclusion of a peace made by common consent.

"His majesty relies on the zeal and public spirit of his faithful Commons, to enable him to make good these engagements: and his majesty, being desirous of continuing to afford the necessary succours to his ally the queen of Portugal, as well as to give timely and effectual assistance at this important conjuncture to the Swiss Cantons, for the recovery of their ancient liberty and independence, and to make every other exertion for improving, to the utmost, the signal advantages, which, by the blessing of God, have attended the operations of the combined arms on the continent since the commencement of the present campaign; recommends it also to the House of Commons, to enable his majesty to enter into such farther engagements, and to take such measures as may be best adapted to the exigency of affairs, and most likely by continued perseverance and vigour, to complete the general deliverance of Europe from the insupportable tyranny of the French Republic. *G. R.*"

A similar Message was presented by lord Grenville to the Lords.

Debate in the Commons on the King's Message respecting a Subsidy to Russia.] June 7. The House having resolved itself into a Committee of Supply to which the King's Message was referred,

Mr. *Pitt* said:—Considerable as is the augmentation of expense which a compliance with the recommendation in his majesty's message will occasion, I do not think it will be neecessary to detain you with much argument in its support. I am persuaded that in proposing to adopt such resolutions as will enable his majesty to carry into effect the intention which the auspicious situation of affairs promises to conduct to so happy a conclusion, I rather meet than lead the feelings of all who cherish those sentiments of manly resistance to the destructive principles which have so long scattered dismay and ruin over so large a portion of the civilized world: sentiments here never extinguished, and now so fortunately reviving in Europe. I congratulate the House upon the glorious success which has marked the magnanimous efforts of that power, for whom the supply is destined for the deliverance of Europe. Embracing with joy the extensive views of enlarged benefit to Europe and to society, looking at the period as not far distant when we shall see the just balance of power restored, and ancient principles and lawful government again recognized, while you enjoy the pure triumph of having contributed so essentially in stemming the torrent which threatened to desolate society, I trust that you will not be so overjoyed at the favourable change, as to relax in the least degree from that deliberate resolution to maintain your own honour and independence, by your own exertions, which has already proved your salvation, and which can give you the best title and chance to be instrumental in the deliverance of Europe. That spirit, and those exertions, can alone qualify you to promote the welfare of others, and to secure your own rights. Even were the common cause to be again abandoned by your allies, were you again to see yourselves called upon to rely upon your own exertions, you will never forget that in the moment of difficulty and danger, you found safety where it is only to be found, in your own resolution, firmness and conduct. In this moment of exultation, while you embrace the interest of others with your own you will resolve to meet every danger rather than submit to any compromise with a power, the existence of which, with the character that belongs to it, and the principles by which it is actuated, is as incompatible with that of legitimate government in other states, as it is with happiness in the people who are subjected to its authority.—Mr. Pitt then moved, "That a sum not exceeding

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825,000*l.* be granted to his majesty towards enabling his majesty to make good such engagements with the emperor of Russia as may be best adapted to the exigency of affairs."

Mr. *Tierney* said:—Sir, I admit the necessity of bringing the war to a speedy conclusion; but in the mode by which it is proposed to be done, we hear of a common cause and a common understanding. Now, before I give my consent to vote away English money, I must know what the common cause is for which I do it. I do not know what this deliverance of Europe means. If it means to rescue other nations from the power and oppression of France, and to drive her from those countries which she has overrun, to such a plan I readily subscribe my mite of approbation. But if it is still to remain a principle undefined, I must pause before I give my consent. I would therefore wish to understand what this common cause is. Does it consist in repelling France within her ancient limits, and seeking an honourable peace upon the *status quo?* If so, I have no objection to a foreign subsidy, because I think money might be more economically applied abroad, than by raising forces at home; and because I wish, if more blood is to be shed, it should be any other than English blood. But if a subsidy is to be given for an indefinite object, what security have I for its application? How do I know that the views of Russia are in unison with our own? How do I know that Russia will not apply it to the furtherance of her own interests without any regard to ours; that she has not views of ambition and aggrandizement herself; and may not think Europe delivered but by stripping France of her conquests, and decorating herself with the spoils? I own, Sir, this sum seems to me to be voted under very extraordinary circumstances, and leading to conclusions which I cannot easily reconcile. The deliverance of Europe must be equally dear to Russia as to England. Why then does not Russia contribute to the success of her own cause; and why is England to pay for the deliverance of Russia? Has Russia exhausted herself by the exertions which she has already made? As yet I know of nothing which she has contributed, except manifestoes and proclamations. Sir, I am anxious for the hour of peace; but however great my solicitude for its arrival, I would not wish, whenever that period shall happen, to look back and see, in the efforts made to attain it, any thing left undone, which might be cause for regret or mortification. To any expense or effort for this purpose, I give my cordial assent; but at no hazard can I give it to that system which I have uniformly reprobated; that system by which war has been protracted from day to day; millions have been expended upon millions, and blood has flowed upon blood, in the pursuit of an indefinite object. Sir, I hope and trust that, whatever differences may have hitherto subsisted, ministers now have but one opinion, and that they are all agreed that the safety of England should be the main object. Deeply impressed with this truth, I will not vote any sums for a purpose I do not understand, and in aid of a power whose object I do not know, which may be appropriated to her own views exclusively, and to the injury instead of the welfare of England.

Mr. *Pitt* said:—I believe no one, who can appreciate worth, and admire superior zeal and activity, will doubt the sincerity of the sovereign of Russia, or make a question of his integrity in any compact. There is no ground to fear that that magnanimous prince will act with infidelity in a cause in which he is so sincerely engaged, and which he knows to be the cause of all good government, religion and humanity, against a monstrous medley of tyranny, injustice, vanity, irreligion, ignorance, and folly. This magnanimous and powerful prince has undertaken to supply, at a very trifling expense, a most essential force, and that for the deliverance of Europe. I still must use this phrase, notwithstanding the sneers of the hon. gentleman. Does it not promise the deliverance of Europe, when we find the armies of our allies rapidly advancing in a career of victory at once the most brilliant and auspicious, that perhaps ever signalized the exertions of any combination? Will it be regarded with apathy, that that wise and vigorous and exalted prince has already, by his promptness and decision, given a turn to the affairs of the continent? With respect to that which appears so much to embarrass certain gentlemen—the deliverance of Europe—I will not say particularly what it is. Whether it is to be its deliverance from the infection of false principles, the corroding cares of a period of distraction, and dismay, or that dissolution of all government, and that death of religion and social order which are to

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signalize the triumph of the French republic, if unfortunately for mankind she should, in spite of all opposition, prevail in the contest. The hon. gentleman has told us, that his deliverance of Europe is the driving of France within her ancient limits; but it is assumed by the hon. gentleman, that we are not content with wishing to drive France within her ancient limits,that we seek to overthrow the government of France; and he would make us say, that we never will treat with it as a republic. Now I neither meant any thing like this, nor expressed myself so as to lead to such inferences. Whatever I may in the abstract think of the kind of government called a republic, whatever may be its fitness to the nation where it prevails, there may be times when it would not be dangerous to exist in its vicinity. But while the spirit of France remains what at present it is, its government despotic, vindictive, unjust, with a temper untamed, a character unchanged, if its power to do wrong at all remains, there does not exist any security for this country or Europe. In my view of security, every object of ambition and aggrandizement is abandoned. Our simple object is security, just security, with a little mixture of indemnification. These are the legitimate objects of war at all times; and when we have attained that end, we are in a condition to derive from peace its beneficent advantages; but until then, our duty and our interest require that we should persevere unappalled in the struggle to which we were provoked. We shall not be satisfied with a false security. War, with all its evils, is better than a peace in which there is nothing to be seen but usurpation and injustice, dwelling with savage delight on the humble, prostrate condition of some timid suppliant people. It is not to be dissembled, that in the changes and chances to which the fortunes of individuals, as well as of states, are continually subject, we may have the misfortune, and great it would be, of seeing our allies decline the contest. I hope this will not happen. I hope it is not reserved for us to behold the mortifying spectacle of two mighty nations abandoning a contest, in which they have sacrificed so much, and made such brilliant progress. —in the application of this principle, I have no doubt but the hon. gentleman admits the security of the country to be the legitimate object of the contest; and I must think I am sufficiently intelligible on this topic. But wishing to be fully understood I answer the hon. gentleman when he asks, "Does the right hon. gentleman mean to prosecute the war until the French republic is overthrown? Is it his determination not to treat with France while it continues a republic?"—I answer, I do not confine my views to the territorial limits of France; I contemplate the principles, character, and conduct of France; I consider what these are; I see in them the issues of distruction, of infamy and ruin, to every state in her alliance; and therefore I say, that until the aspect of that mighty mass of iniquity and folly is entirely changed;—until the character of the government is totally reversed;—until, by the common consent of all men, I can with truth tell parliament, France is no longer terrible for her contempt of the rights of every other nation—she no longer avows schemes of universal empire—she has settled into a state whose government can maintain those relations in their integrity, in which alone civilized communities are to find their security, and from which they are to derive their distinction and their glory;—until in the situation of France we have exhibited to us those features of a wise, a just, and a liberal policy, I cannot treat with her. The time to come to the discussion of a peace can only be the time when you can look with confidence to an honourable issue; to such a peace as shall at once restore to Europe her settled and balanced constitution of general polity, and to every negotiating power in particular, that weight in the scale of general empire which has ever been found the best guarantee and pledge of local independence and general security.

Mr. *Tierney* said:—I have received an answer, and it does carry the conviction, that we are now about to embark in a seventh year of the war, aiming at an indefinite object, warring against system, and fighting with English blood and English treasure, against French abstract principles, without the smallest regard to the burthened state of the country. The right hon. gentleman has spoken out. It is not merely against the power of France he struggles, but her system; not merely to repel her within her ancient limits, but to drive her back from her present to her ancient opinions—to such a style of thinking as may effect the deliverance of Europe. The result is, that we are to go on until the government of France is over-

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thrown. The right hon. gentleman admits, that the republic may be placed in a situation in which it will not be dangerous to the liberty of Europe: and when a peace may be concluded with it in safety, but it is not until the mode of thinking on which the republic is founded shall be overthrown. It is impossible to connect France and liberty together. No man more detests her than I do. I feel the greatest indignation at her perfidy and deceit, her pretence of delivering surrounding nations from tyranny, and ruling them, when in her power, like the most ferocious despot. With these sentiments, I am not afraid of being suspected of partiality for France. Sir, liberty has suffered much from the extravagant friends of it. I own I loved the principle of the revolution in its commencement, and therefore I may be allowed to lament the more the direction which its progress has taken. The question is not, I admit, whether this or that boundary shall be the limit of the country, but what shall most contribute to peace and tranquillity. My opinion then is, that France, driven back to any thing like her ancient limits, will not be any thing like what she was in strength and power. I believe the case of France is like that of all other bad governments. I believe, left to prey upon herself, France would be more in danger from internal discontent and dissention than from all the troops and armies that can be sent against them. But, admitting we are to wait until opinion shall be overthrown in France, how will the right hon. gentleman be able to ascertain the arrival of that period? I know some gentlemen enter sanguine expectations of overthrowing the government of France. My whole object, on the contrary, in the present state, is to contend for England, and England alone. I do not mean to say that she must be a disinterested observer of what is passing in the world; but I think the real interests of England would be found more in the exercise of her own virtue and perseverance. To this I would add another attribute, her good sound sense. I believe this will soon show itself. I believe the good sense of the people of England will not be willing to engage them in every attempt in which the right hon. gentleman is about to engage. It is not the spirit of this country to impose a government on France; and there is no good sense in engaging in a crusade against the rights and liberties of others, I know it will be said, they are not rights, but extravagant and dangerous principles. Here, then, the right hon. gentleman and they are at issue. May they not entertain the same ideas of a government which they understand fosters designs hostile to the liberty of others? and if so, who is to be the arbiter between them? For my part, I know of no security but the limited relative power of nations. In the crippled state of her marine, France has lost much of her power. The wisdom which I wish to see displayed is, that which consists in knowing where to stop, and when France is sufficiently reduced. If the object of the minister had been to unite the other powers of Europe in confederacy for the purpose of diminishing the extensive and overgrown power of France, I do believe an extraordinary effort might have produced that effect; but now that we are confessedly at war against undefined principles and opinions, what security have I that voting a sum of money will facilitate the attainment of the end proposed. At the efforts of Austria in Switzerland I rejoice; and I hope the Emperor will not, in rescuing it from France, purloin for himself. But does the right hon. gentleman believe, that when the Austrian arms have advanced to France, they will not find the French soldier very different on his own ground from what he was on a conquered soil? Does he not believe, that the moment a French foot is placed on this soil, all party and all difference will subside, and one unanimous wish alone fill every breast to rally round the government, and repel the invader? I do think a prospect is now opened to our view, which may be followed up with infinite advantage. The French by pillage and tyranny, have so disgusted all nations, that it might be very practicable to drive them back within their ancient limits. If that were the right hon. gentleman's view, I should readily support him; but that is not the case. The right hon. gentleman has disappointed my hopes: I thank him for his explanation; but having heard it, I cannot vote any subsidy for foreign service.

Mr. *Pitt*.—Sir; I cannot agree to the interpretation the hon. gentleman has thought proper to give to parts of my speech. He has supposed that I said, we persevere in the war in order to restore monarchy to France. I never uttered any such intention. What I said was, that the France which now exists, affords no promise of security against aggression

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and injustice in peace, and is destitute of all justice and integrity in war. I observed also, that the character and conduct of that government must enter into the calculation of security to other governments against wrong, and for the due and liberal observance of political engagements. The hon. gentleman says, he has too much good sense to suppose that territorial limits can, of themselves, be made to constitute the security of states. He does well to add his sanction to a doctrine that is as old as political society itself. In the civilised and regular community states find their mutual security against wrong, not in territory only; they have the guarantee of fleets, of armies, of acknowledged integrity, and tried good faith; it is to be judged of by the character, the talents, and the virtues of the men who guide the councils of states. France has territory, she has the remains of a navy, she has armies, but what is her character, as a moral being? who is there to testify her integrity? The Swiss nation!—Who bears testimony to her good faith? The states she has plundered! What is the character of her advisers? what the aspect of her councils? They are the authors of all those calamities which, marching by the side of an unblushing tyranny, have obscured the fairest portions of Europe. In fine, we are to look for security from a government which is constantly making professions of different kinds of sentiments, and is constantly receding from every thing it professes; a government that has professed, and still manifests, enmity to every state in Europe, and particularly to this country.—The hon. gentleman persists in saying, that we have an intention to wage war against opinion. It is not so. We are not in arms against the opinions of the closet, nor the speculations of the school. We are at war with armed opinions; we are at war with those opinions which the sword of audacious, unprincipled, and impious innovation, seeks to propagate amidst the ruins of empires, the demolition of altars, the destruction of every venerable and good and liberal institution, under whatever form of polity they have been raised. Whilst the principles avowed by France, and acted upon so wildly, were confined to the circle of a few ingenious and learned men, we saw nothing in them to alarm, nothing to terrify; but their appearance in arms changed their character. We will not leave the monster to prowl the world unopposed. He must cease to annoy the abode of peaceful men. If he retire into the cell, whether of solitude or repentance, thither we will not pursue him; but we cannot leave him on the throne of power. The hon. gentleman says, that the French republic and liberty cannot exist together; therefore, as a friend to liberty, he cannot be a friend to France. Yet he tells us almost in the same breath, that he will not vote for any thing that does not tend to secure the liberties of that country, though, to give him the benefit of his own proposition, not to wish the overthrow of France is not to wish for the preservation of English liberty. Indeed, he says, he will vote nothing for the purpose of overthrowing that tyranny, or, as he very strangely adds, the rights and liberties of others—the rights and liberties of France! But how will the gentleman maintain his character for consistency, while he will not vote for any measure that seeks to overthrow the power of a government, in the contemplation of which he has discovered a gulph in his mind between the ideas of its existence and the existence of liberty? Whilst republican France continues what it is, I make war against republican France; but if I should see any chance of the return of a government that does not threaten to endanger the existence of other governments, far be it from me to breath hostility to it. I must first see this change of fortune to France and to Europe make its progress with certain steps, before I relax in the assertion of those rights, which are the common property, the links of union of the regular governments of Europe.

Mr. *Tierney* said, he would not contribute any subsidy to take the choice of a government from the hands of a people, and place it in those of strangers. He saw with regret what had passed in France; but though they had failed in forming a government, it did not follow that a foreign armed force could devise a better. He did not profess himself an admirer of the system; all he said was, that an endeavour to change it by force could not be productive of any good consequence.

Mr. *Windham* said, that the subject in debate had been so ably elucidated by his right hon. friend, that he must despair of making it more intelligible. The committee might therefore feel some surprise at his offering himself to their attention, were it not that the hon. gentleman still

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seemed to persist in his misrepresentation. That gentleman argued, that the object of the war ought to have been stated in precise terms at its very outset. Now, nothing could be more irrational. The war was, in its commencement, entirely defensive; nor, from the state of Europe at the time, could it have appeared in any other light: it was entered upon for the security of Europe; and it was still carried on upon the same principle. The main question at issue was the limited reduction of the power of France. Upon this topic, however, the hon. gentleman had carefully excluded all consideration of the character of its government: but if security was our ultimate object, it was surely obvious that it must materially depend upon the power and will of the state to be negotiated with. It was not to be expected that a government, composed of the very dregs of vice and infamy, would treat with us upon those conditions of mutual security, which would have regulated the conduct of nations possessing a similar constitution and government, and placing an honourable pride in the maintenance of good faith with their neighbours. But he would ask, what was the rationale of the question? Did France unequivocally declare that she no longer persisted in her mad views of conquest and aggrandizement, there might then be some reasonable motive for attempting to treat with her. But if she still continued to avow those ruinous projects, and openly declared, that the existence of her present government was inconsistent with that of the other governments of Europe, what security could they possess, were she even driven within her ancient territory? Would she not still entertain the same restless and ambitious views towards her neighbours? and would she not still possess very powerful means of annoying their tranquillity? Could France again, confined to a population of twenty-four millions, be regarded as an inconsiderable power? Had she not, at all times, been powerful enough to distract every state within the sphere of her influence, and to maintain a dangerous rivalship to this country? But the hon. gentleman thought it was a sufficient answer to this, that she could not commence her future projects of invasion with the same advantages which she had hitherto enjoyed. It was undoubtedly true, that she could not again possess the advantage of an infatuating delusion, which had invested with insolent security that junto of plunderers who had hurried her forward in the career of blood and rapine. He would not, however, with toilsome minuteness, trace all the hideous progress of a monster, who never made a step but to gain an advantage over innocence, or to overthrow the defenceless. Were he to contemplate it in all the relations of its character, it would be difficult to determine when he would wish to make peace with it. But in all the great affairs of men, that combination of circumstances must be embraced, which promises the most beneficial general result, and, proceeding upon this maxim, he would say, the period which he would select for this desirable object, would be, that in which the dangers of peace would be less than those of war. The hon. gentleman had supposed that a difference of opinion had prevailed among ministers relative to the object of the war. Speaking for himself he could say, that he did not differ from his right hon. friend in any thing that had fallen from him that evening. He wished for a liberal, not a revolutionary government; for a government founded not upon the imaginary rights of man, but on the ancient religion and morality of Europe. He would not, however, contend, that it would be expedient to continue the contest till such a government could be established; his opinion was, that peace ought to be concluded, the moment it could be done in consistency with our security, dignity, and honour. He would not conceal that he thought no mode of government so suitable to France as her ancient monarchy. If a revolutionary government were to be supported, there must be recourse to that fertile source of vice and calamity, the primary assemblies. He confessed that he did not much relish a government made in a frame; the government of his choice, was that which found its source in the affections of the people, derived security from their prejudices, and strength from their passions; and such alone, with regard to France, was that which was bound up in the stems of its ancient monarchy. But in changing its condition, the first consideration was, to drive it within its former limits. If he then were asked, whether he wished the allied armies to impose a new government upon it by force, he would answer, no! He knew that if such an attempt were made, it

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must fail; as every nation considered a contest on its own territory as a struggle for its existence. He was certainly desirous that France should enjoy a beneficial and rational liberty. What kind of liberty did she now enjoy? It was only of late, in that land of freemen, that such a privilege as the freedom of speech had made its appearance, a freedom which advanced with the march of the armies of that monarch which the hon. gentleman had denominated a despot, and which was exercised only under the protection of general Suwarrow. What was the ancient despotism of France? Certainly, if compared to the government of this country, the difference was very marked, for ours was a government *sui generis*; but if compared to that of Turkey, or, what better suited his purpose, to the government which succeeded the monarchy, it would not be a very difficult thing to decide which was the greatest despotism. It was not by light efforts that the links of that republic, one and indivisible, were kept together. Gentlemen might indulge their fancies in drawing comparisons between the present humane, just, and amiable government of that country, and that of the tyrant Louis 16th; but in his opinion, to compare the irregularities, or even crimes of that monarch to those of the present rulers was a kind of language which was fit only for ale-houses, and deserved to be classed with the vulgar exclamations of soupe maigre and wooden shoes. Nothing could be more desirable to this country than the restoration of the monarchy; for, notwithstanding all its defects, it could never do us any serious injury, compared to the incalculable mischiefs which the present abominable system was peculiarly fitted to produce.

The Resolution was agreed to.

Debate in the Commons on the Budget.] The House having resolved itself into a Committee of Ways and Means,

Mr. *Pitt* rose and said:—Sir; As the discussion of the objects to which your attention is now directed, has on a former occasion occupied the minds of gentlemen, it will not be necessary for me to dwell on them at much length. It is now my duty to recapitulate the supplies, and to lay before the committee the ways and means to which I intend to have recourse to provide for the expenditure. I shall begin with recapitulating the different heads under which the articles of Supply are usually classed:

	£.	£
Navy	13,653,000	
Deduct diminution of navy debt and saving expected in 1799	1,403,000	12,250,000
Army		8,840,000
Vote of Credit, 1798		1,000,000
Extraordinaries, 1799		2,500,000
Ordnance, exclusive of sea service		1,570,000
Miscellaneous services		3,261,351
Deficiency land and malt		498,000
Subsidy to Russia		825,000
National debt		200,000
		30,947,351
Vote of credit for 1799		3,000,000

I shall next state the articles of the Ways and Means, to which I intend to have recourse to meet this expenditure:

	£.
Sugar, tobacco, and malt	2,750,000
Lottery	200,000
Surplus of consolidated fund in Jan. and April, 1799	521,000
Growing produce of ditto	3,229,000
Exports and imports	1,500,000
Ten per cent on income	7,500,000
Instalments on aid and contributions, 1798	650,000
Loan, first	3,000,000
Loan, second	12,000,000
	31,350,000
Deduct half year's interest on 8,000,000*l.* 1798	240,000
Ditto one year 11,000,000*l.* at 5*l.* 7*s.* per cent	588,000
	828,000
	30,522,000

Exchequer bills 3,000,000*l.*

My next duty, is to state to the committee the terms upon which the loan has been made. The usual mode of receiving offers by open competition has been adhered to. The proposal was made to the competitors of taking 125*l.* in the 3 per cent consols, and 50 in the reduced, and it was accepted at the price of the day, considerably less than the actual value of 100*l.* Three most respectable houses agreed to pay for 125*l.* in the 3 per cent consols 69*l.* 4*s.* 4½*d.* and for the reduced 28*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.* making 97*l.* 6*s.* 10½*d.* which, with the benefit of the discount at 2*l.* 6*s.* 6*d.* gave 99*l.* 13*s.* 4½*d.*

The next object will be the charges that are to defray the interest upon part of this loan which remains unprovided for by any other fund. The amount of this sum is no more than 315,000*l.* The principle which I propose to go upon is, that there

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shall be no loan contracted for during any year, greater than what the amount of the sinking fund can pay off. By the operation of this fund the whole of the loan that is now to be raised of 15½ millions will be paid. The whole of the taxes which I mean to move for will rest upon articles that arise entirely out of the present circumstances of affairs, and so far from operating as a tax, will rather be a relief to the public. This is to be done by withholding a certain proportion of the bounty that has been allowed as a drawback upon sugars exported from this country. I propose, that on clayed sugars from the British plantations, in addition to all other duties, a duty of 4*s.* per cwt. be laid, which, estimating the whole at 200,000 cwt. will produce 40,000*l.* On British plantation sugar exported, I shall also propose to withhold 2*s.* 6*d.* per cwt. of the drawback, in addition to 4*s.* now retained on 358 cwt. on East India exported 76,000 cwt., at 6*s.* 6*d.* which will produce the sum of 62,000*l.* On foreign plantation sugar exported, at 2*s.* 6*d.* per cwt. will produce 14,000*l.* By taking 4*s.* per cwt. from the bounty now payable on refined sugar exported, there will arise a sum of 39,000*l.* And by withholding 4*s.* from coffee exported, a sum of 65,000*l.* will be produced. British sugars left for home consumption, at 8*d.* per cwt., I estimate will produce 56,000*l.* There is another article upon which I propose to lay a duty. In many parts of the kingdom, there is an extensive circulation of small notes. On every note under 40*s.* I shall propose to lay a tax of 2*d.*; and as the number supposed to be circulated throughout Great Britain is estimated at 1,500,000*l.* this tax, according to that number, will produce 62,000*l.* But in a matter of so great uncertainty as this, I will suppose the amount to be 42,000*l.* The whole making a total of 316,000*l.*

I am sure that the various circumstances of these statements must confirm in gentlemen's minds the inestimable advantages that the public will derive from an adequate provision being made to answer the exigencies of each year. It must fill the mind of every man with satisfaction to contemplate so pleasing a prospect, that should the war be lengthened to ever so distant a period, we shall have within our power the means of carrying it on with vigour, if our expenses shall not exceed the sums at which they are now estimated, and if we adhere to the system of borrowing no more than shall be answered by the taxes already existing; we have the satisfaction to observe, that although the tax on income is to be continued during that period, yet every year of war entails the continuance of that tax only for one year after the conclusion of a peace; and that there shall only be a charge of permanent taxes to the amount of 300,000*l.* additional on the country. Therefore, when we are about to calculate the burthens of the war, and compare them to the evils attending an insecure and dishonourable peace, let us ask ourselves this question: shall we pay for another year a tax of ten per cent on income? shall we by that comparatively small sacrifice, save ourselves and our posterity from future burthens? or shall we, by a want of energy and public spirit, increase our difficulties, and furnish our enemies with the only advantages they can have over us? Let us ask ourselves, what difficulty shall we have hereafter in bearing the burthens of a temporary loan each year of ten or eleven millions, for the payment of which a fund shall have already been provided? loans which will produce no greater burthen than a tax of 300,000*l.* in each year of war. To be able to ascertain the certainty of this proud situation, is a circumstance in itself invaluable. Every event that has taken place within a short period, shows that we are rising in private wealth and public prosperity. Every thing convinces us that we are in a situation in which we ought not to stop short of that adequate, full, and rational security which we have a right to expect. Every thing that now presents itself to our view must serve to do away the gloomy prognostics, which some persons, from a spirit of opposition to government, and others from timidity and despondency, were in the habit of making. At the time when I offered to the House the plan for increasing the assessed taxes, there was no one measure that excited so great a clamour, and raised so many doubts in the minds of men, as to the probability of its endangering the permanent revenue, or striking at the root of the manufactures and commerce of the country. We, however, in spite of all this opposition, made the experiment of adopting a measure, the principle of which has, during the present session, been carried to a greater extent: we have the satisfaction to see that one plan was acted upon; and that the other had been accepted with the ge-

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neral concurrence of all orders of men. The credit and prosperity of the country are not alone manifested by these general symptoms; they even appear in the different rounds of pleasure, amusements, and dissipation, with which many persons in the higher ranks of life are in the habit of indulging themselves. There cannot be a stronger proof than this, that the people have not been distressed by means of the war; and that there is nothing gloomy in the finances of the country. But how has the war affected the trade and revenue of the country? Our trade has never been in a more flourishing situation: the perpetual taxes of the present year exceed what they were last year, when they amounted to 14,574,000*l.* a sum greater than ever was produced in the most flourishing times of peace. I need not ask whether the raising of the supplies within the year will be any detriment to the country; the experiment that has already been tried, proves the contrary. So far from that measure having caused any diminution in our trade, the imports of the last year are much greater than those of any former year; they amount to 25 millions, whereas those of the year 1797 amounted only to 21 millions. A similar augmentation has taken place in our exports, both of home and foreign manufactures. The latter, in the year 1797, amounted to 28 millions: the last accounts that have been made up, state their amount at 33,800,000*l.* The great advantages arising from such a plan must be obvious to every body: it is that plan which of all others will be most likely to lead to a speedy conclusion of the contest in which we are engaged. The system that has been pursued in this country, with respect to finances, has frequently varied. In all the wars previous to the present, the mode of raising money has been that of borrowing, and leaving to posterity the burthen of paying principal and interest. The successful institution of the sinking fund has made a most material alteration in this system. The consequence of this institution will be, that whatever may be the expense of any war, each year will carry along with it the extinction of a certain portion of the debt that may be contracted; and in case of the continuance of some years of peace, the whole of the national debt will, after the expiration of a certain time, be liquidated by the accumulating operation of this fund: so that our debt may rather be considered as an annuity for a limited number of years. But this is not all. The plan which has been successfully adopted of raising the supplies within the the year, will tend to relieve us from all the lasting burthens which a great accumulation of debt would throw upon the country. Supposing the consolidated fund to go on as it has done for some years past, and that there should be no extraordinary rise in the price of stocks, it will in the year 1808 arrive at its maximum. The period from the present to that time will be an interval of great stress upon the country; but it will not be difficult to provide taxes for these eight years. Here Mr. Pitt entered into a detail of calculations, which went to show, that the whole of the national debt might be extinguished in the space of 38 years of peace; that supposing the war to continue ever so long, it could be carried on without the creation of new debt; and that in case the war should soon be terminated, and that an interval of ten years should happen between the conclusion of one and the commencement of another war, in that period of peace the sinking fund would discharge 70 millions of debt, and enable the country to enter into another war with superior means.—Mr. Pitt then moved his several resolutions, which were agreed to.

Debate in the Lords on the King's Message respecting a Subsidy to Russia.] June 11. His Majesty's Message having been read,

Lord *Grenville* rose to propose an address. He said, that the conduct of Great Britain, in this momentous contest, had been noble and great beyond any thing recorded in the page of history. It had taken the lead in the glorious undertaking of relieving the civilized world, from the insupportable tyranny of the French republic. In this great cause, it had been the opinion of ministers that the cooperation of Russia would be of the utmost importance, and he had then to congratulate the House upon the attainment of that very desirable object. It was happily unnecessary that he should expatiate on the good consequences of the accession of Russia to the alliance; they were felt and seen throughout the whole continent; and on these grounds he had the fairest reliance on the unanimous concurrence of their lordships to the proposed address. He then moved, "That an humble

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Address be presented to his Majesty, to return his Majesty the Thanks of this House, for his Majesty's most gracious Message; to assure his Majesty, that we feel it our indispensable duty to support his Majesty to the utmost, in making every exertion for improving the signal advantages of the present campaign, and for completing, under the blessing of God, by continued perseverance and vigour, the general deliverance of Europe, from the insupportable tyranny of the French republic; and that we will therefore cheerfully concur in enabling his Majesty to make good his engagements with the Emperor of Russia, to give assistance to the Swiss Cantons for the recovery of their ancient liberty and independence: and to continue his assistance to his ally the queen of Portugal and to make every effort which may best contribute to the permanent security of his Majesty's dominions, so deeply interested in the issue of this contest."

Earl *Fitzwilliam* observed, that in almost every point adverted to by the noble secretary of state, as well as in the tenor of the address, he most cordially agreed; but he thought that neither went far enough, and under this impression he felt himself called upon to propose in the way of amendment to the address, a slight alteration: not such a one as would in the least do away the vigour and energy of its sentiments, but, on the contrary, give them additional weight and strength, by rendering the whole more clear and explicit in explaining, and manfully declaring the real object of the present momentous contest. The object of the war should be, and to that declaration his proposed amendment would go—not only to deliver Europe from the tyranny of the French republic, but from the French republic itself. He had no doubt but such a declaration, made in a manly and explicit manner, would be productive of immediate good consequences, not only with regard to the allies and to Europe at large, but in France itself. When he said in France, he alluded to the disgraceful and tyrannous yoke borne by the people, under their present odious form of government: such a decided declaration would unite every honourable and feeling spirit in that country against the directorial tyrants. He was aware that it might be objected to him, that one independent nation should not interfere in the internal government of another; but surely it must be allowed, that if ever this maxim was inapplicable, it was in the case of France—a country which, without the least regard to justice, even in appearance had interfered with and subverted the governments of all those nations where her influence or arms preponderated. France was so circumstanced, as to be, ever since the revolution, in a state of perpetual war, not only with all the governments of Europe, but those of every civilised country in the world. These considerations were abundantly sufficient to make up his mind with respect to the political principle he had alluded to; and deeming so of France, he had no hesitation in pressing an interference with respect to the government of that country. When he considered such an immense track of territory in the heart of Europe, with such an immense population as France presented, and lying under the absolute yoke and direction of a set of unprincipled tyrants, owing their political existence to such a government as now existed in France, he could not think Europe could be safe for one moment: but in advancing those bold and decided propositions, he would wish to have it understood that he meant only the government of France; not France as a nation, nor the French as a people, who, he was confident, at least a great majority of them, viewed their present tyrannical form of government with horror and detestation, and would gladly embrace every opportunity to cast off their rulers; and in the room of the present system he thought it would be most eligible and expedient to restore the ancient monarchical government of the country, under which its inhabitants had enjoyed for ages a great degree of political happiness and security, and Europe at large a degree of tranquillity which there was not the smallest probability of its possessing while the French republic existed. His lordship then proposed as an amendment to leave out these words in the address, "the insupportable tyranny of," which omission would cause that particular sentence to run thus, "to deliver Europe from the French republic."

The Earl of *Liverpool* observed, that such an avowal, under the present circumstances, would be highly indiscreet; besides, it was such a one as could not with propriety be included in such a parliamentary declaration as that now in question. It was impolitic, as tending to fetter the exertions of the executive

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power; and it involved a question of particular terms of pacification, which it was obvious must depend upon contingencies and events, which no man could with any degree of certainty foretell. He considered it as impolitic in the extreme, thus prematurely to declare, that in no case war shall terminate, until a specific form of government is established in France.

Lord *Holland* could not agree to the amendment, as it would be pledging the House and the country to carry on a war of extermination against the French republic. There was no doubt but that the ambition of France had shown itself on some recent occasions in a manner which could not but excite alarm; but much as he might wish to see its power reduced, it was quite another proposition to wage war definitively for the purpose of imposing a monarchy on that people. Nothing could be more idle than to imagine that France would accept from any foreign power a government not of its own choice. The people might be divided in opinion, and the government oppressive, but a foe at the gates would unite the people, and give means of defence and triumph to the government. With regard to the granting a subsidy, if such policy could at any time be wise, it was probably so at present; but before he could cordially vote for the address, he must first know what was really meant by ministers when they spoke of the deliverance of Europe. To have the benefit of general and hearty co-operation among the people, government ought to declare the specific object of the war. Had they changed their sentiments since the period of the two negotiations at Paris and Lisle? If that was so, the public had a right to be informed of it. At those periods two different declarations were published of the sentiments of his majesty concerning the issue of the negotiations themselves, and stating his readiness to treat for peace whenever the enemy should show a disposition to meet him on just and equitable terms. Now, it was his intention to propose an amendment to the address, embracing in substance these declarations of his majesty. He was persuaded the people of this country, every sober thinking people in Europe, and France herself, would regard such sentiments at least with complacency; but what would not be the consternation and dismay, when, upon the authority of a vote of that House, Europe would be told that we persevere in the war without any known object but to destroy the principles of the revolutionists of France? Was the war carried on for the purpose expressly of reducing the power of that nation? If it was, it should have his support. Was it carried on against opinion? That was madness. Was it a war that ministers were determined to carry on until they had chastised the Directory of France for its ambition? In fine, was it to punish ambition? Perhaps some noble lords thought the latter a good ground of war; but if it was, what would be the situation of the members of the coalition? If Russia should go to Poland to recruit its armies for the deliverance of Europe, might not the people of that sacked, divided, and plundered country, say, "Deliver us." The same of the emperor of Germany in Venice and other parts; so that this war to chastise France for her ambition might end with inflicting stripes on the allies. Again, to consider the war as a war of policy and prudence, how stood the question? Was the House quite sure that Russia sincerely wished only to check France and reduce her power? Had Russia no views of aggrandizement —no comprehensive scheme of exclusive dominion? He would suppose that Russia was in earnest, and not at all actuated by that kind of motives. But who could for one moment suppose Austria free from ambitious projects, and sentiments of exclusive advantage? From the past it was quite fair to argue, that the cabinet of Vienna would turn aside from the contest the moment the measure of its ambition was filled. If, on the other hand, Russia should be found to have entered into the war also from motives of aggrandizement, how manifold the dangers to this country and to Europe from a lengthened war! It was fair to assume that all this was possible, and would the House lightly regard such serious matters? Under the interpretation of the language of the address, it was obvious that we were henceforward to pursue, not a war of ordinary character—not a common war—but a crusade against the nation and people of France. The amendment he had to propose would go to counteract what was dangerous or impolitic in the Address, by inserting, after the word Republic, "by prosecuting a vigorous war, till the republic of France shall be disposed to enter on the work of general pacification, in a spirit of conci-

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liation and equity, agreeable to his majesty's solemn declarations of Dec. 27, 1796, and the 28th of October, 1797."

Lord *Grenville* observed, that no man would deny that the existence of the present government of France was incompatible with the security of the other governments of Europe. It was against this government, acting on its present principles, that he would wage war. Yet if ever the government changed in such a manner as to make it safe to treat with it, he would enter upon the work of peace without any regard to the name of its government. The censure so freely dealt out on the conduct of the court of St. Petersburgh and of Vienna, it had, perhaps, been full as decent to have spared. But as it seemed to be the principal object of the noble baron to hear what ministers would say of the conduct of those powers in the case of Poland, no consideration of policy would prevent him from declaring, that for the partition of Poland those powers were very blameable, and sooner than sign the deed of partition he would have cut off his hand. There was, however, one remark which it might not be improper to add on this subject. The partition of Poland, a theme trite and old in itself, was that evening brought forward as an accusation against the emperor of Russia. Now surely it would have been more consistent with justice and truth, had the noble lord recollected that that transaction was among the events of another reign: and who would say that it would have been politic—that it would have added to the happiness of his old subjects or his new—had the emperor Paul restored his portion of Poland, at his accession to its former masters and to its government? If the noble lord must undertake to be the general censor of the kings of Europe, he ought to recollect that probably many, indeed all of them, hold possessions by very doubtful titles. Even the right of the crown of Great Britain to Jamaica might be disputed. Those who considered the subsidy necessary for the general purpose of checking France, and taming the spirit of its government, must see the necessity of not coming to any specific declaration. For one, he would avow his object. He wanted security; not a security to which the present government of France would be a party, but a security resting on the tried good faith and justice of a well tempered government. Much had been said of a crusade against France, and of a war waged for the extermination of opinion. Such declamation very little deserved to be seriously commented upon. If used reproachfully, then he would say that the word "crusade" was improperly introduced; for the truth was, it was a coalition of powers gloriously in arms to defend all just and legal governments, and the rights of every people, against the tyranny and the injustice of the French Directory.

The Marquis of *Lansdown* observed, that with respect to the present war, from its commencement to that hour he had never entertained any opinion but one—that it was a war of kings, entered into by a confederacy of kings, and carried on with a view of supporting their power. He had also constantly maintained, that the British cabinet wanted to destroy the republic of France, and restore the ancient monarchy; and that they had never been sincere in their desire of concluding a peace. It was perfectly relevant for the noble lord near him to make the observations he had done on some of the monarchs who were engaged in the coalition. For his own part, he could never speak otherwise than respectfully of persons in that high situation. He knew the veneration he felt for his own king. Next to the religion of any country, he considered them as things the most sacred, and consequently most entitled to respect. But it was impossible for any man not to express his indignation at the conduct that had been pursued by some of the crowned heads who were engaged in the present war. Would any noble lord suppose that a sincere wish to guard the regular governments of Europe against an ambitious republic, was the motive that actuated those powers to join the confederacy against France, when those very powers availed themselves of that coalition to seize on Poland? They knew that that was the time to do an act which destroyed the balance of power in Europe, because England, on account of the war in which she was engaged in common with them, could not prevent it. In his opinion, there was no solid ground for the expectations held out by ministers of the general deliverance of Europe, and it was highly impolitic in them to declare an opinion with respect to the species of government they wished to have established in France. It was car-

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rying on war with king Reubel, king Barras, &c. Would any of the people of France, after hearing the declarations of the British ministers, forward their views in this contest? For his part, were he a Frenchman, and did he ever so much detest the tyranny of his government, he would, notwithstanding, resist any foreign power that should attempt to impose a constitution upon him. It was the duty of ministers to act with decision: they never had done so: they ought to have declared their specific object in prosecuting the war; instead of that, they varied their tone with every change of circumstances; and at last, in the most impolitic manner, gave the enemy to understand what their real objects were. He did not think a secure peace incompatible with any form of government in France, and therefore he would support the amendment of the noble lord near him.

The amendments were negatived, and the Address agreed to.

Debate in the Commons on the Forfeiture for High Treason Bill.] May 9. The House having resolved itself into a committee to consider further of the Report of the Secret Committee relative to a Treasonable Conspiracy,

Mr. *Abbot* rose to make his promised motion respecting the Law of Forfeiture, and desired that the acts of the 7th queen Anne, c. 31, and 17th Geo. 2nd, c. 9, should be read; which being done accordingly, he spoke as follows:—When the Report from the Committee of Secrecy first came under our consideration, I took occasion to call the attention of the House to those passages in it which state to us, not only that treasons and seditions of the most dangerous tendency are now plotting in this country by persons of mean note and desperate fortunes, but also "that they have received, in some degree, the countenance and pecuniary aid of persons in higher situations of life." At the same time, I also took the liberty of calling the attention of the House to the present state of the law respecting the forfeiture of inheritances upon attainder of high treason, as a matter intimately connected with the means of repressing traitors of this rank and description; and I presumed to represent to the House, that upon confronting the actual state of this branch of the law with the existence of these treasonable practices, it appeared to me to become the indispensable duty of parliament at this juncture to interpose its authority, and not to suffer the laws to be relaxed by any accidental event, at a time when the dangers arising from these crimes are the most alarming.

Sir, the more I have since reflected upon this question, and the more I have conversed upon it with persons both in and out of this House of various descriptions, whose sentiments are entitled to the greatest respect, either for their learning in this branch of constitutional jurisprudence, or for their general knowledge of the state of opinions in this country, the more I have been confirmed in thinking it right to propose to this committee an express resolution for the purpose of preserving the law of forfeiture upon what I conceive to be its true footing, and for establishing it permanently in the same extent to which it was carried after the union, when the same uniform law of forfeiture was extended throughout Great Britain. The general policy of such a measure appears to me to be justified by the fundamental principles of all government, and to have been sanctioned by the universal concurrence of the most enlightened nations in all ages. Certain it is, that we find it interwoven with the whole frame and texture of our own constitution, and I trust that it will be deemed, at this crisis, a measure of absolute necessity to assert its justice, and perpetuate its consequences. I am always inclined to think, that whenever we find the practical experience of all ages to be in favour of any measure of policy, we shall find upon examination that it rests upon principles which are sound. Of the forfeiture for state offences, it has been long ago said, and truly said, "Id et antiquum est et omnium civitatum." And if we examine the principles on which this practice is founded, surely they will appear to be as conclusive as they are obvious; when we recollect, that all property is the creature of civil society, that its tenure, conditions, and duration, must be modelled by positive law, and that the dominion over property which is allowed to each individual, and enables him to alienate it at his pleasure, being allowed only because it operates to the general interest and prosperity of the state, the resumption of it is also strictly consistent with the true ends of civil society, when the individual to whom it is imparted aims at the destruction of the state to which he is indebted for protec-

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tion. Every wise government will, for its own preservation, employ of course, the strongest means; and one of the most powerful checks for the repression of this specific crime is to be found in the infliction of forfeiture; for treason being in its formation slow, progressive, and deliberate, the individual, who is brooding upon his plans of guilt, when he looks round upon those who are connected with him by the nearest ties of existence and affection, must (according to the probable influence of every principle implanted in human nature) feel his ambition damped and his resolution unnerved, if not by the dread of his own hazard, at least by the prospect of involving those in his own ruin whom by his very machinations he is seeking to aggrandize.

I know that it is sometimes objected to this policy, that it overlooks the considerations of compassion which are due to the heirs of the offenders. To this, however, there are many answers. In the first place, that the same event which has happened to them by the guilt of their ancestor might equally have happened, if he had dissipated the same inheritance by his folly; and that, in either case, it is not an injury, but a misfortune. But a more conclusive refutation of such an erroneous reasoning is to be found by pointing out, that such a view of this subject is partial and false; and false, because it is partial; and that upon the same ground, if a more extended view be taken of the same subject, the just commiseration will appear to be due to the numberless individuals who would become the sufferers in those scenes of blood and confusion, if they were not protected by the terror of these punishments. And it is always to be kept in mind, that in every wise and well framed government the very power of resumption is placed in the hands of the sovereign, who may either remit the forfeiture wholly, or may apply it for the indemnification of others, at least equally innocent, who may have suffered more, or may hold the forfeiture as a pledge to be redeemed by the future loyalty of those very persons whose expectations have been frustrated by the disloyalty and guilt of their ancestors.—That these general principles upon which the question rests are satisfactory, I think most men will agree; but to us who have the happiness to enjoy the blessings of the British constitution (not the production of any abstract theory or untried speculation, but the practical result of accumulated experience), this matter cannot admit of any doubt; for most unquestionably it has been the invariable policy of the law of England, from before the conquest down to the present century, that forfeiture should be the penalty of treason. In the earliest times, every estate in fee-simple was liable to forfeiture; and by the statutes and adjudications of subsequent ages, the forfeiture has been gradually extended to hereditary dignities and offices, to trust estates and entailed estates, to freehold leases, to copyholds, and even to dower.

Upon this subject, it is extremely remarkable, that although the law of treason, both in its definitions and its mode and circumstances of trial, has been alternately extended and contracted by the struggles of contending parties, yet the principles of forfeiture have been universally recognised, and its penalties maintained throughout. It is remarkable, that when the treasons, which were created in such abundance during the wars between the houses of York and Lancaster, were reduced by the act passed on the accession of queen Mary to the standard of the 25th of Edward 3rd, yet the forfeitures were nevertheless kept in force. The cumulative treasons of the last century have been since most justly reprobated; and at no time has the liberty of the subject stood so securely upon this question as it stands since the act of the last parliament relative to treason, because that law has given a legislative interpretation upon many points which formerly rested upon judicial construction, and has fixed the definitions of the offence in terms more distinct and explicit than we find them in any former period.

Nor does the matter rest here. We have also to remark, that the circumstances of trial for treason have also varied, but without any variation in the law of forfeiture. The act of king William, which gave to the prisoner the benefit of a full defence by counsel, and provided him with a compulsory process for his witnesses, was, in my judgment, a great and necessary improvement; but it must be recollected, that the very same act recognises the penalties of forfeiture, and in no degree curtails them. A farther alteration, indeed, was introduced in the reign of queen Anne, which required lists of the jurors and of the witnesses for the crown to be delivered to the prisoner ten days before his trial. But this, Sir, was a

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change, in my opinion, much to be regretted; and I speak not this lightly; I have for this opinion the authority of sir Michael Foster, a great authority upon these subjects, who plainly condemns it as detrimental to the interests of the public, which (he says, and truly says) are deeply concerned in every prosecution of this kind, which is well founded: and I have also a still greater authority, that of parliament itself, which has since found it necessary to rescind this provision in all the inferior sorts of treason; and I have no hesitation to declare, that if ever it shall be rescinded totally, and if the mode of trial for treason shall be restored to the footing upon which it stood by the act of king William, it will be a great improvement in the administration of criminal justice. But be these matters as they may, thus much appears incontestably, that whatever changes have taken place in the law of treason, the principle of forfeiture has been preserved throughout, and confirmed in the best times; at a time when the transactions of the Revolution were fresh in every man's mind, this principle was acknowledged as fit to prevail; and at the union it was also carried in its fullest extent into Scotland.

With this view of the question before us, it may be thought somewhat extraordinary that we should now be called upon to decide whether we shall any longer retain this safeguard of the constitution, or relinquish it for ever; but the circumstances which oblige us to decide are also extraordinary. It so happened, that in the same parliament which passed the law for improving the union in 1708, and in the same bill which established the law of forfeiture in Scotland, an attempt was made in this House to restrain forfeiture in all cases to the life of the offender, or, in other words, to abolish it; but the wisdom and firmness of lord Somers prevailed on the Lords to stop so rash a measure, by suspending the effect of the proposed alteration until after the death of the Pretender;* hoping (as contemporary historians have said) that the prudence of succeeding parliaments would go farther. When the rebellion of 1745 was approaching, and a bill was brought in to prevent treasonable intercourse with the Pretender's family, lord Hardwicke (following the example of lord Somers) proposed a clause for again deferring this extinction of forfeitures until after the death of the Pretender's sons.* And the law of forfeiture now depends upon the life of the cardinal of York, the last descendant of the house of Stuart, an unfortunate fugitive, who has lived through three-fourths of the present century, and whose existence (if he be yet living) cannot, by the course of nature, be of any long duration. This is the circumstance which obliges parliament now to decide this question: and we are called upon, as I contend, by every motive of reason and experience, to pursue the course which lord Somers and lord Hardwicke pointed out to be the best for the country, and to re-establish the law of forfeiture for ever. Unless we do so establish it, it is clear that we shall violate one of the fundamental principles of our whole criminal code; for forfeiture (or escheat, which is of the same nature) runs through every branch of it: it is a consequence annexed to high treason, petty treason, felony, flight, and outlawry. In felonies, the day and year to the king, and the escheat to the lord, will still remain in force, even if we suffer these forfeitures to cease in treason; and if we do so, we shall invert the whole scale and proportion of crimes and punishments, so that henceforth it will be less penal to commit treason than to commit a common felony; and the life of the sovereign and the liberties of the country will be less protected than the life and property of the meanest individual.

If motives like these could want additional weight, it is to be found abundantly in the events of the present times. It is but too manifest that treason will not die, nor sleep in the same tomb with the cardinal of York; and at such a time as this, to throw down the fences and safeguards which defend the throne and our own liberties, is to act in defiance of the warning voice of all Europe. Add to this, that the treasons of our days surpass those of former times, as their aim is wider, and their character more malignant. Their aim is not even masked under the pretext of seeking the redress of any specific grievance, it is not to obtain any partial change in the state, it is not for any distinct reform in our religious establishments, nor for any modification of

* See Vol. 6, p. 797.

* See the Extract from the MS. Parliamentary Journal of the Hon. Philip Yorke, Vol. 13, p. 704.

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either branch of the legislature,—but for nothing less than one general sweeping and indiscriminate destruction of the whole constitution together. "Non libertatem, sed sanguinem nostrum concupiscunt." The malignancy of their character is distinguishable by the restless spirit which it infuses into the lowest orders of the people, encouraging them to take up arms, and teaching them that they have great and powerful partisans and leaders who are secretly prepared to seize the favourable moment for showing themselves openly at their head, when they can hope to do so with impunity. Some such leaders were found in Ireland; and they have perished: that such may discover themselves in England, is but too much to be apprehended from the report before us; and if any such shall appear, who bear hereditary honours, it is fit that the law of forfeiture should extinguish for ever the name which they have disgraced; or if there be others who are aspiring to distinction and power by prostituting their wealth to the support of traitors, no honest man will regret that their property and their lives should fall a joint sacrifice to the safety of their country. Impressed with these sentiments, and urged by these feelings, I have presumed to think the present measure proper for the consideration of this committee;—and the effect of the motion which I shall have the honour to put into your hands, will be to do away the particular provision in the acts of the 7th of queen Anne and 17th of George 2nd, which make the forfeiture for treason terminate with the death of the cardinal of York,—and to render the laws of forfeiture as lasting as its justice is incontrovertible, I now move "That leave be given to bring in a bill to repeal so much of an act, passed in the 7th of queen Anne, and also so much of an act, passed in the 17th of king George 2nd, as puts an end to the Forfeiture of Inheritances upon Attainder of Treason after the death of the Pretender and his Sons."

Dr. *Laurence* said, that though he had not made up his mind upon the present important question, he was ready to say that he saw nothing in the nature of the measure proposed that could effectually prevent treason from taking place. There was nothing peculiar in the nature and character of the present treasonable conspiracies (which no one more cordially execrated than himself) that called for the adoption of such a precaution. It was moreover to be remembered that it was a particular and leading point in the terms of the union of Scotland with England, that the laws of forfeiture should be abrogated. It was then stipulated that the laws respecting treason should remain the same for the two countries; and this doctrine was supported not only by every Scotch member in the debate on the bill for the improvement of the union, but also by the Whig party, and by thirteen out of the sixteen Scotch peers in the other House of Parliament. The majority were always for abrogating that law. At the present period he saw no necessity for continuing that law *in terrorem* against persons of rank and property who might foment conspiracies, and countenance and support traitors; for if there were any men of rank and wealth who could abet such designs, on those men the laws of forfeiture, &c. could make no impression, to induce them to abandon any such projects to which they might be madly wedded. There was also something in the very time when this measure was proposed, which made it highly unseasonable. A union was now in agitation with Ireland, where it had uniformly been the policy to instigate rebellion, in order to promote confiscation; and if the union should take place, and this law be kept in force, that abominable policy would have new and continued incentives to irritate and foment rebellions which might but too easily be provoked in the present temper of that distracted country.

The *Master of the Rolls* could not coincide in opinion with the learned member who spoke last, and recommended a work of the honourable Mr. Yorke's on the laws of forfeiture, as one that would throw much light on the subject under discussion.

Leave was given to bring in the bill.

June 25. On the order of the day for going into a committee on the bill,

Mr. *Abbot*, in moving that the Speaker do leave the chair, recalled the attention of the House to the general nature of the bill. After recapitulating the principal points of his former speech, he continued nearly as follows:—But, Sir, besides the necessity of rendering the law consistent, and besides the specific necessity for annexing this kind of punishment to treason, there is another consideration to which I must request the serious attention of the

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House; and it is to this, that by the law of king William, which regulates the trial of treason, many of the most valuable privileges allowed to the party accused, such as the obligation imposed on the prosecutor to produce two witnesses to the same overt act, or one witness to each of two overt acts of the same kind of treason, and the right of the prisoner to compulsory process for bringing his own witnesses, and the right to make a full defence by counsel, were all granted expressly in consideration that the treasons to which those considerations apply, are such as work a corruption of blood; and so it is expressed, not only in the preamble, but also in every enacting clause of the law; and if these forfeitures were now to cease, it would be a momentous question, whether the subject would not also lose the most important means of defending himself at his trial? and thus they who are most desirous of rejecting the bill now proposed, instead of mitigating the laws of treason, will only be enhancing their severity.—With regard to the general objections which are sometimes urged against this measure, they appear to be contradictory in themselves; as they impute to it in one point of view, that it goes too far; and in another, that it falls short of its own end. To those who allege against the law of forfeiture that it is an odious prerogative, tending to confer on the crown such means of oppression as are not to be endured in a free government, I beg leave to answer, that by the British constitution the crown is also invested with another prerogative, and is bound by the most solemn obligation to exercise it—I mean the prerogative of mercy; a quality which is unknown to republican forms of government, and has no place in any code of jacobin philanthropy: and we have ample testimony in these times, that this is no dormant prerogative, and that our ancestors have done wisely by intrusting the crown with the power of assigning the measure and limits of grace and restitution.—To those who contend, on the other hand, that forfeitures are not only odious, but ineffectual to their own end, because they may, in some instances, be defeated by family settlements; I beg leave to answer, in the first place, that they are at least effectual so far as they go; and in the next place, I by no means admit that the patrimonial fortunes of great families are universally settled, or else Greenwich hospital would not now be in possession of the Derwentwater estates, nor would the highlands of Scotland have received the many great public improvements which they have derived from similar funds: but as applied to the treasons of the present day, these forfeitures must be still more effectual than in other times; inasmuch as Jacobin principles by their very nature are most likely to infect the minds of men newly raised to hopes of personal distinction, by newly acquired opulence, which has not yet attained either the stability or maturity upon which settlements usually attach, and such men are generally in themselves too fond of power and domination to fetter their own fortunes, or pledge them to others by irrevocable rights of succession.—Sir, before I sit down, I must request the House to extend its views also to the consequences of this question, as they concern the whole empire: it is important that the same law upon state offences should prevail throughout: the law which it is now proposed to you, not to establish, but to preserve for Great Britain, is at present the established law of Ireland: and by adopting this bill we shall render the system upon this subject the same in these two kingdoms, which I hope and trust we shall soon be accustomed to consider as in every respect inseparably united.

Sir *Francis Burdett* began by observing, that as the present question related only to the higher orders of the country, it could not well be suspected that in the discussion of such a topic, it was his object to court popular applause. He had listened with attention to the arguments urged by the learned gentleman in favour of its adoption, but he expected to have heard much more forcible ones than those entered on in support of the measure. In the first place, the learned gentleman expressed a wish that the law respecting high treason should be uniform, and the same as it now exists with respect to felons. The law on this head was already sufficiently severe and sanguinary: yet it did not attempt to interrupt the line of succession, nor did it confound the innocent with the guilty. Where, then, was the argument which the learned gentleman endeavoured to draw from analogy? But again, he says it is wise and expedient to renew these laws, and to hold them out *in terrorem*, that they may deter those who harbour a zeal,

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fondness and attachment for their children, from committing crimes against the state. This is urged on the ground of utility, independent of that of justice; but no ground could surely be more untenable. The arguments advanced in its support evidently led to conclusions of a complexion so atrocious, that he trusted they could exert no influence over the House, or on the mind of any man that was even slightly tinctured with justice and humanity. These arguments were built upon a principle of terror, not on the principles of the constitution; and the principle of terror was undoubtedly alien from the breasts of Englishmen, as well as from the spirit of the British constitution; it was not usual for the throne of England to be armed with terror; its wonted guard and shield was the attachment and affection of the nation; but it seemed to be no inferior or subordinate object with the present administration, to eradicate the throne from the hearts of the people, and to plant it upon their necks. With what effect or advantage this change would be effected, time alone could disclose. Here it might not be improper for the House to recollect what had been the conduct of this forgiving English people, when a king of England had been expelled from the throne for the various cruelties and tyrannies which he had exercised. Did that English people exterminate his whole race, for the delinquency of one man? No; they chose the next heir of the same family, whom they placed upon the throne. From this instance and example there was some room to learn a lesson of lenity, wisdom, and moderation. But it seemed that the danger was now greater and more imminent from the contagion of Jacobin principles; but no arguments had been offered to prove the real existence of these dangers; and he trusted that gentlemen would not be induced to put their estates in jeopardy from the dread and groundless apprehension of these chimerical dangers, while they would expose their families and children to real ones. They should therefore observe, that the consequences of the present measure must be dreadful and extensive, but the policy and wisdom of it doubtful and uncertain. If there was any thing that could add to his unwillingness to adopt it, it was the moment at which it was proposed. Ireland was said to be on the eve of a union with this country. Ought we not to have waited till this object was accomplished, before we betrayed a total disregard to all agreements? Should it not also be considered that we were not merely about to renew a former act of the legislature? The laws respecting treason had been materially altered and obscured; and these alterations might be looked upon as snares laid for the people, though by some they were commended, because, if these laws were too plain, the disaffected, it was said, might know too well what they were about. But we ought to be aware of acceding to such proposals under the idea that we were only doing what had been done on similar occasions arising from similar causes. Would it not be enough to renew those laws at their natural time of expiring, if then it should appear to be wise and expedient so to do? He hoped and trusted therefore, that as no urgent ground had been proved for the immediate necessity of the measure, we should not be induced to adopt it, on the supposition that we were merely adopting what had been in force before.

Mr. *Jolliffe* considered the measure as the most unjust, severe, and cruel, that had ever entered into the mind of a human being, and one which would disgrace the code of any country under heaven. It proceeded on a very false supposition; for it was ridiculous to imagine that a man who had no fear of personal danger, would have any for those who would come after him. It was further nugatory, inasmuch as its object could be totally defeated by a settlement of the property previously to the owner's entering upon any treasonable attempt. But what principally weighed with him was its flagrant injustice. He would put the case, that he himself were foolish enough to embark in a conspiracy to overthrow the government, and that his son, who was now in the army, would continue, as he had no doubt he would, faithful to his allegiance, and do every thing to counteract that conspiracy—by this measure the reward of his fidelity would be the stripping him of all his paternal inheritance, and leaving him to want and beggary.

Mr. *I. H. Browne* regarded the argument drawn from the punishment of innocence as sophistical, for it was impossible to inflict any punishment, however just, that did not, more or less, expose innocence to suffering and distress. A war might be undertaken on the most just

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grounds, and yet soldiers who perished in the contest were innocent men. Men might, in the phrenzy of passion and disappointment, enter into criminal projects against the peace of society, but a law of the kind now proposed was calculated to produce that sober and comprehensive reflexion which would appease the first feelings of resentment. The present laws of treason were singularly mild, and in no other case was the conviction of a criminal a matter of so much difficulty.

Mr. *Hobhouse* said, that gentlemen would do well to consider to what extent the measure went. Its object was not merely to give a permanent continuance in cases of high treason, to the law of forfeiture, but also to corruption of blood; the former of which was designed to bring present poverty and disgrace upon the offspring of a man attainted of that crime, the latter to doom the children, the children's children, and future generations to perpetual indigence and dishonour. Many eminent persons had considered forfeiture as a salutary terror, calculated for the protection of the state, but entertained an abhorrence of the corruption of blood. The bill aimed at the perpetuation of both. For his own part he approved of neither. With respect to the forfeiture of the traitor's lands and tenements, so that his children could not succeed to the possession, the observation of the hon. gentleman (Mr. Jolliffe) was undeniable. Was there a maxim of natural justice more clear than this, that no man ought to be punished, except for his own fault. Could any thing be more iniquitous than to visit the sins of the fathers upon the children? It appeared to him less unjustifiable to copy the Chinese laws, and to make parents suffer for the offences of their children, because the vices of children are often ascribable to a neglected or faulty education, than to inflict punishment upon an innocent child on account of the guilt of his father. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Browne), had affirmed, that children had no natural right to succeed to the property of their parents; that the transmission of it from father to son was the mere creature of civil society, the mere effect of municipal institution; and, therefore, the state was entitled to take it away whenever the public safety required. Now, in his opinion, the child had a just claim to inherit the property of those, who, being the instruments of his existence, were bound to render it as comfortable as possible. This was deeply implanted by the author of nature in the mind of man. He did not wish, however, to enter into an abstract disquisition of natural rights; he would assume, for the sake of argument, that the right of inheritance was merely a civil right, and ask the question, how the safety of the state could be promoted by confiscating the livelihood of an irreproachable and afflicted widow, of harmless orphans, and unborn posterity. The good of the state, so far from requiring such severities, called loudly for the abolition of them. The children stripped, of their inheritance, would detest the government which sanctioned such harshness and injustice; the same odium would descend from generation to generation; thus whole families would for ages be alienated from their country. Was this a method of giving additional security to a state? No, Sir; affection, not terror, is the best foundation of a monarch's throne. This sentiment was well expressed in the preamble to the statute of the 1st of queen Mary. It recited, that "The state of every king consists more assuredly in the love of the subject towards the prince, than in the dread of laws made with rigorous pains: and that laws, made for the preservation of the commonwealth, without great penalties, are more often obeyed and kept, than laws made with extreme punishment." Happy would it have been for her subjects, if that bigotted princess had always acted conformably to the just and liberal views which she seemed to have entertained at the beginning of her reign. The hon. member had also contended, that there was no injustice in depriving, by this law of confiscation, a virtuous family of their means of support, because it was impossible to punish any offender without occasioning some detriment to his family. If a fine were imposed upon a criminal, it took away perhaps a sum necessary for the maintenance of his wife and children. If imprisonment were his punishment, it deprived them of the fruits and advantages of his industry; if death were the sentence, his execution necessarily plunged the whole circle of his relations into the deepest distress. This was undoubtedly true; but it must be remembered, that the misfortunes sustained by the family in such cases, are the natural and necessary consequences of the punishment inflicted

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upon the delinquent, and not the effect of any law against themselves. And strange, indeed, did that man reason who, because a convict could not endure any kind of punishment, without affecting in a greater or less degree those with whom he was nearly connected, would therefore aggravate their sorrows.—Enough, he thought, had been said to make it apparent, that nothing could palliate the injustice of taking from the child of a traitor his paternal inheritance; and if that were not vindicable, still less so was corruption of blood. An example might, perhaps, serve to render this subject clear to those who are unaccustomed to legal investigation. A grandfather is seized of an estate in fee; his son, who has a family, commits treason, is tried, convicted, judged, attainted, and executed. By the law of forfeiture, his children cannot succeed to his lands or tenements in the course of descent; by the horrid doctrine of corruption of blood, the innocent children and their descendants cannot inherit the estate even of their innocent grandsire. The inheritable blood of the traitor being considered as extinct, no person whatsoever can claim any hereditaments through him. Surely gentlemen must recoil from the contemplation of these posthumous severities. Little less terrible was the law of the Macedonians and Persians, which doomed to death, not only the traitor, but even his distant kindred, nay his whole race. He could not help recollecting, while he was upon this part of his subject, the famous golden bull of Germany, which enacts, that although the lives of the sons of those who conspire to kill an elector, are spared by the mere bounty of the Emperor, yet they should be deprived of eligibility to all offices of honour or emolument, should be deprived of the rights of succession to all property, "to the end that being always poor and necessitous, they may for ever be accompanied by the infamy of their father, may languish in continual indigence, and may find their punishment in living, and their relief in dying." The same inhuman language must now, he said, be used by the advocates for corrupting the whole blood of the traitor. They would interrupt the course of descents, that his children, and all his claimants deriving title through him from any remoter ancestor, might never know the advantages of inheritance, and thus find "their punishment in living and their relief in dying." It was on account of the rigour attendant on this worst consequence of attainder, that many high authorities were desirous of putting an end to corruption of blood. Mr. Justice Blackstone had avowed that opinion. He said that "as every other oppressive mark of feudal tenure is now happily worn away in these kingdoms, it is to be hoped that this corruption of blood, with all its connected consequences not only of present escheat, but of future incapacities of inheritance, even to the twentieth generation, may, in process of time, be abolished by act of parliament, as it stands upon a very different footing from the forfeiture of lands for high treason, affecting the king's person or government. And, indeed, the legislature has, from time to time, appeared very inclinable to give way to so equitable a provision, &c." What were the sentiments expressed by a lord Auckland in his excellent treatise on the principles of the penal law? He agreed with Blackstone, and declared that "with pleasure he saw the approach of that day, when the posthumous rigours of forfeitures would cease; and the impediments of descent no longer affect a blameless posterity." And in another passage the same judicious author had said "we may safely conclude that corruption of blood with all its endless consequences, will have a speedy and total abolition, as any farther intervention of parliament therein would be contrary to the sacred regard due to national compacts." An hon. baronet (sir F. Burdett) had declared that any attempt to perpetuate forfeiture and corruption of blood was contrary to the terms of union with Scotland. It was thought desirable at the time of the union, that the law of treason, should be rendered uniform in both countries. The English House of Commons maintained, that this uniformity would be best effected by the abolition of forfeiture and corruption of blood throughout the united kingdoms: and in that idea it was supported by the Scotch nation, whose punishment of treason was, in some respects, milder than in England. The House of Lords resisted; and at length it was agreed, that, if Scotland would consent to make itself liable to the English forfeitures and corruption of blood for a time, namely, until the death of the then Pretender to the throne, those severities should from that period be annulled in every part of Great Britain. By a clause in the 17th of Geo. 2nd, c. 39, the effect of the statute of Anne

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was suspended until the death of the sons of the Pretender, one of whom only was now living, an aged man the last of the Stuart line. This suspending clause was declared by Mr. Fazakerley,* an eminent lawyer of that day to be subversive of the conditions of the union. If, then, a prolongation of the existence of these posthumous rigours beyond the period assigned by the statute of Anne were a breach of faith, what must be thought of this measure, which had for its object the perpetuation of them? Well, therefore, might the hon. baronet exclaim, "what a lesson do you here hold out to Ireland!" You declare, that an incorporative union between England and Ireland would be for the happiness of both countries. Ireland, enchanted with her independence, refuses to listen to you even for a moment. You persevere, and determine to record upon your journals the fair, liberal, and advantageous proposals upon which you are willing to ground your treaty. But what is the language of this bill? Incorporative union has no fundamental laws for its basis, from the instant it has taken place, the sovereignty is in the united parliament, which may enact whatever it deems for the public good, without any regard to previous conditions, without adherence to engagements, or observance of compacts. Must not this bill then excite in the Irish nation additional disgust against your favourite project of a union? In this light the bill is no less impolitic than unjust and inhuman. The hon. mover had observed, that if forfeiture and corruption of blood, in cases of high treason were suffered to expire, there would be an inconsistency in our laws, because those punishments were annexed to many kinds of felony; and that thus the man, who should take away the life of his sovereign, or excite rebellion and civil war in the country, would be less punishable than him who was guilty of an offence much inferior to the *crimen lesæ majestatis*. This certainly was true; but there was an obvious remedy—by one general and undistinguishing statute sweep away forfeiture and corruption of blood, the principle of which admits of no justification or excuse, and the inconsistency is cured. And with respect to the life of the sovereign, that is sufficiently protected by the statute 25th Edw. 3, c. 2, by which an intention to destroy the king is made equivalent to the actual murder of one of his subjets. Another argument in support of this bill was derived from the peculiar circumstances of the times. A neighbouring country we were told, had furnished an unhappy proof of the baneful tendency of Jacobinical principles—such principles, wherever they had been received, had carried destruction in their train. Were not secret societies formed, upon the French model, in this country, for the wicked purpose of undermining our constitution, our religion and our laws, and substituting, in the room of subordination and regular government, the horrors of anarchy and revolutionary tyranny? Was it not evident, by the report of the secret committee, that treason was prevalent at this moment, even in England? Taking for granted all the statements in that report, there was no treason among the lower orders of men, who were not likely to pay much regard to forfeitures and confiscations. But if it were supposed that the traitorous societies, said to abound in this country, had been joined by many persons of rank or property, then the rigorous penalties, now under consideration, had been proved to be ineffectual; and strange it was, in pleading for the continuance of laws, to appeal to their inefficacy. It would be more conformable to good sense to apply for the repeal of such useless laws, and to contend, either for the introduction of others of a severe complexion, better adapted to existing circumstances, or for the adoption of milder measures and a more lenient system. The latter was the conclusion which he inferred from the report of the secret committee. How different, then, were the impressions which that report had made upon his mind, from those which it had excited in the breast of the hon. gentleman to whom the perusal of it had suggested the propriety of bringing forward this measure?—Would you, Sir, prevent the spread of treason and sedition? it is to be accomplished not by coercive laws, not by rigorous punishments; but by the correction of abuses, by the redress of grievances, by the mildness of your government. Thus you take away from the ambitious and the desperate every engine calculated to work upon the minds of the lower orders. There is no truth of which I am more strongly convinced than this—that no insurrection, on the part of a people, for the purpose of effecting a change in the form of government, can ever rise to a formidable height, if their

* See vol. 13, p. 884.

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freedom be not violated, if oppression be not suffered to exist. I wish I could flatter myself that the House was likely to concur in the sentiments I have expressed for I should then indulge the pleasing prospect that, upon the decease of the cardinal of York, men would be no longer liable to be tried, after their bones had been deposited in the sepulchre of their ancestors, that the sacred silence of the grave would be no longer profanely disturbed, and that innocent orphans and their posterity would be no longer devoted to infamy and ruin.

Mr. *Jones* said, it had been observed, that the Jacobins in this country amounted to 80,000. He did not believe there were near that number; but he was very sure the present measure would tend to create them. It was hard to visit the sins of the father upon the children.

The question being put, that Mr. Speaker do now leave the chair; the House divided:

Tellers.

Yeas	Mr. Abbot - - - - Mr. Hawkins Browne -	57
Noes	Sir Francis Burdett - Mr. Hobhouse - - -	8

So it was resolved in the affirmative.

Debate in the Lords on the Forfeiture for High Treason Bill.] July 4. On the order of the day for the second reading of this bill,

Lord *Holland* rose to oppose it. He stated the nature of the punishment, proposed by the bill to be rendered perpetual from Blackstone, where it is described not only as the deprivation of every species of property, but as destroying the inheritable quality of the blood, by forbidding any title to be derived, through the person convicted, to his posterity. Having dwelt upon the great extent of this punishment, he argued on the inefficacy of it, resulting from its overstrained severity. In two ways, severe laws defeated their own object—by increasing the difficulty of detection, and by diminishing the respect for the laws. Where punishment exceeded the bounds of necessity, all the good passions of mankind were excited, not against the crime and the criminal, but against the punishment and the laws. Men of kind and generous natures were not disposed to see them inflicted; and even in cases where they were put in execution, the criminal, instead of exciting indignation, became an object of pity. But if this was the case with the offending party himself, how much more strongly must the best passions be armed on his side, if the eye, turning from his execution, should see the punishment entailed on his innocent posterity! The injustice of this law, the appeal which its victims made to the feelings of mankind, was not transitory but permanent: the unhappy descendants were continual objects of pity and commiseration, and lived generation after generation libels and satires on the justice of their government. A law thus operating on the guiltless was founded in injustice, and contrary to the fundamental principle of right and equity. His lordship then took a view of the arguments on which it had been from time to time attempted to be supported. One of these was to be found in the late Mr. Yorke's pamphlet; a book, the reputation of which was more owing to the celebrity of the author than its intrinsic merit—a composition of such erudition, but tedious without parallel; heavily written, and miserable in point of reasoning. In it Mr. Yorke stated, that the objection grew out of the nature of society, in which it would be found impossible to punish the guilty in any instance without affecting the innocent. This argument was founded in fallacy; it was taking up that as a principle which was merely incidental; it was saying—because, from the nature of society, his innocent connexions must be involved in the fate of the guilty, we should therefore act upon it as a principle, and totally disregard them in apportioning the punishment—because, says this notable argument, we cannot punish the guilty without affecting the innocent; we will therefore begin by punishing the innocent, in order to affect the guilty. Cicero was another authority adduced by the advocates for forfeiture and corruption of blood. That great orator had laid it down, that the state had a right to avail itself of the best feelings of men for its security, and the prevention of crime. In the passage, however, where this sentiment was expressed, the author was defending an imputed act of injustice, and therefore it had not all the weight of a pure, ingenuous opinion. But, even admitting that it had, it was liable to objection; as upon the same ground he might justify torture, and every other act of tyranny and injustice

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that arbitrary power had ever resorted to. If this principle were true, where could we stop? Why are we to condemn those laws which, in Persia and other Eastern countries, murdered, for the crime of treason, the children, the parents, the relations, the friends of the offender? His lordship next adverted to the arguments drawn from the nature of property and inheritable succession, as the creature of society, and a favour from government. This, he said, was the very Jacobinical doctrine so much abused. Admitting, however, property to be such a creature, and the right of transmitting it to his posterity to be a favour from government to the subject, it did not follow that they should be withdrawn at pleasure. But here, too, the principle of injustice recurred in an increased degree; for if the power of transmitting property were a favour, the power of inheriting it was surely a greater favour; and therefore he that enjoyed the less favour by his actions, drew on the innocent the loss of the more important favour. To interrupt its descent, was to punish the guilty a little, but the innocent to an enormous extent. Then we were told, he said, of a conspiracy in the country to overthrow the government, and divide the property of the nation among the desperate and necessitous: it was described as a system of treason, in which the poor were armed against the rich; and therefore this law was to be introduced as a remedy. Now, if this statement were true, to perpetuate the law of forfeiture and attainder was most needless; for how the disability of transmitting his property, should operate upon men who had none, he was at a loss to discover. Considering, then, the moderation of our ancestors in that in which they were the least moderate; considering that even they, to punish and restrain treason and rebellion in the case of men whose rank and fortune brought them particularly within the terrors of such a law, had only made it temporary, he could not consent to see it, on so much weaker grounds, rendered perpetual. He would leave, however, all abstract and speculative doctrines, and proceed to what carried ten times more conviction to his mind than all the writings of Grotius, Puffendorf, and Cicero, even supposing the opinions of the former to be as clear and explicit as they were dark and intricate, or of the latter to be as positive and uniform as vague and variable. He meant that which was preferable to all theory and visionary systems, the wisdom resulting from practice and experience, and the consequences to which the measure, so far as it was hitherto acted upon, had led. For this he would not refer their lordships to the history of England, but to what was passing in the sister kingdom. It was well known that the population of that country was divided into papists and protestants, the latter of whom possessed the confiscated property that once belonged to the ancestors of the former. Now, what was the alleged object of those charged with treason and rebellion? Why, to dispossess the Protestants, and recover that property of which the papists were deprived by the laws of forfeiture, beneath which they had fallen. He meant not here to examine whether these charges were true—the Protestants affected to suspect the Catholics of such designs: whether they really entertained such monstrous intentions, or whether the Protestants wickedly imputed that intention to them to furnish them with a pretext for oppressing, still in either case the laws of forfeiture were the fountain from which such designs or such oppression had their source: to them the distracted state of Ireland was to be attributed. Here, then, we had before our eyes the growth of this law, its progress and its fruits; a law which engraved on the heart and mind of the subject his injury and his wrongs: which entailed them from generation to generation; which rendered it impossible for him to forget the injustice he had suffered; which armed one part of society against the other; which made a man's neighbour his despoiler, preventing him from becoming a useful member of society, because at his birth it deprived him of the means, as a zealous supporter of the state, which had interdicted him from its benefits. Such were the consequences of the law as experienced in Ireland; a law which had spread hatred and dissension through the land, and rendered jealousy and dislike perpetual; a law which, at the moment dissentions were on the point of being healed, stepped in between the parties, and said, No; there shall be no reconciliation, no tranquillity, no amnesty; the feuds which have existed, shall exist for ever; the wounds which are inflicted shall never be healed, and dissention shall be your portion; suspicion on one side, and vengeance on the other, shall be your

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nheritance. "Pungent ipsique, nepotesque." Regarding, then, the doctrine of forfeiture as the great source of the troubles which distracted that kingdom, he must deprecate the idea of rendering it perpetual in this. The punishment of confiscation was the favourite and dreadful engine of arbitrary power, because, at the same time that it glutted its revenge and cruelty, it gratified its avarice. It had been the tyrant's resort in all times and in all countries, even in our own. He did not allude to the present day; but as it had been formerly resorted to for the worst of purposes, such times might come again. This objection had the more weight with him, as he saw ministers embarked in schemes of enormous expense, how, then, could he be certain, but this law, if rendered perpetual, might not hereafter be used to furnish a supply for the wants such expense must unavoidably create? It had been used as an engine for such purposes once: what security had we that it might not be so used again? The recent history of France furnished a case of such application. He must also consider it as a breach of contract with Scotland. It was an implied condition of the union, that this law should be suffered to die away; and it had been afterwards relaxed in favour of individuals; but now this promised indulgence was to be withdrawn, and it was proposed, contrary to the merciful indulgence so long held out, to render it perpetual.

The *Lord Chancellor* said it was a mistake in the noble lord to state the present bill as a new law, and a law foreign to the constitution. It had made a part of the law of England from the earliest times, and had suggested itself to the wisdom of our ancestors, as a law actually necessary to be in force for the safety of the state, from periods of the remotest antiquity. The bill which this bill went to repeal, was an act of the 7th of queen Anne, in which some persons were enabled to obtain the insertion of a clause, the apparent object of which was somewhat extraordinary, as its tendency was to insinuate that treason, instead of being a crime of greater magnitude, was of less import and weight than other felonies. Some years back a debate occurred in one of the Houses of Parliament upon the subject, in which a near friend of the noble lord eminently distinguished himself; and on that occasion, a person who was apt to speak rather whimsically, the late lord Egmont, chose to argue the clause which he had mentioned, as a clause intended to operate as a toleration for treason. The learned lord stated why in the present bill, that clause was omitted; and took notice of the Considerations on the Law of Treason, written by the late Mr. Yorke. He said, it was a work to which it was usual to look up as the composition of a man well acquainted with his subject.

The Earl of *Radnor* said, that the expediency of the law of forfeiture was very much doubted by many great lawyers in former times, and he thought its tendency at any period to prevent treason extremely questionable. The treasons abroad in the present day, however, were not of a species which this bill would be very likely to affect. Since they had been afloat, there was but a solitary instance of the application of the law in the case of a younger branch of a noble family in the sister kingdom. With respect to that case, indeed he much doubted whether forfeiture had been properly applied. He did not mean to give any opinion as to the guilt of the individual, but he thought that the proceeding was very doubtful, because the party had no opportunity to defend himself, and there was a possibility, that he might have been innocent, since he did not fall in battle against the crown and government; a case that could leave no doubt as to guilt. He begged leave also to remind their lordships of the maxim of the divine law, that a son was not to suffer for the iniquity of the father. He was decidedly against the bill.

Lord *Grenville* admitted, that if the present description of treason was a conspiracy of the poor against the rich, forfeiture could have little effect on those who had no property to forfeit. But while the great mass of traitors were, perhaps, of that description, there were men of rank and property in the back ground, by whom they were instigated, and without whose influence their efforts would be of little avail. In support of this assertion, he referred to the late duke of Orleans, who had taken so active a part in the French revolution; and also to the case of lord E. Fitzgerald. It was therefore necessary to take care, that every obstacle should be thrown in the way of men of rank and fortune, who should be willing to delude the multitude into acts of treason and rebellion.

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Earl *Fitzwilliam* said, that if ever there was a time when we should revert to the sure practice of wisdom and moderation, it was the present. The principle of confiscation was the principle acted upon by the revolutionary tyrants of France. If plunder of property was looked forward to by domestic traitors, we should be cautious of setting the example. They could not be more gratified than by having the doctrine of confiscation acknowledged and established; from thence they would endeavour to draw a justification of their own views. Seeing it in this light, he could not assent to the present bill. Besides, he conceived it incapable of remedying the evil it was expected to cure. If the duke of Orleans was not to be deterred by such considerations, what weight could they be expected to have with persons of little comparative interest?

The House divided: Contents, 8; Not-contents, 4.

Protest against the Forfeiture for High Treason Bill.] The following Protest was entered on the Journals:

"Dissentient,

1. "Because this statute, which it is by this bill proposed to make perpetual, appears to us to be unjust and impolitic, and contrary to the mild spirit of the laws of England—unjust, because it reduces to poverty and ruin children for the crimes of their ancestors; impolitic, because, instead of healing the divisions and animosity occasioned by civil war, it tends to make them continue.—It appears to us to be contrary to the express declaration of Magna Charta, which says, that no person shall be disinherited or deprived of his franchises unless he be heard in his defence; for in this case we disinherit persons who cannot be heard, and who have committed no crime.

2. "Because it does not appear that any urgent necessity calls for the immediate adoption of this law at this late period of the session, when it cannot receive the due consideration which a question of this sort deserves, and when the attendance is so thin in this House.

3. "Because we have the satisfaction of thinking it is not necessary for the preservation of his majesty, whose throne cannot be more secure by severe penal statutes: we therefore will not agree to destroy the hope which sir William Blackstone exultingly says our posterity may entertain, that corruption of blood may one day be abolished and forgotten.

(Signed) "PONSONBY,
"HOLLAND."

Slave Trade Limiting Bill.] July 5. On the order of the day for going into a committee on the Bill "to prohibit the trading for Slaves on the Coast of Africa, within certain Limits,"

The Duke of *Clarence* said:—My lords; When contemplating the vast importance of the present question, I feel concerned and perplexed that it should fall to my lot to open a discussion of such magnitude. The noble secretary of state has frequently thrown out the idea, that the delay originated with those peers who had taken a decided part against the bill. If professional knowledge and local experience have extended the examination at the bar to a length that may, in the opinion of some noble lords, have been much more than what was satisfactory, I, for one, plead guilty. It was my wish, by the most minute research, to produce such a body of evidence as would convince your lordships of the rectitude and policy of those with whom I have the happiness to act. To persons so well acquainted with the history of this country as your lordships, it would be great presumption on my part to engage your attention, by a detailed account of the African trade carried on by the European nations; suffice it to say, that in 1442, the Portuguese began it. In 1471, the Portuguese built the first forts on the Gold Coast, and had 37 vessels in the trade. In 1502, the Spaniards commenced the same trade; and in 1517, Charles V allowed the Portuguese to furnish Hispaniola, Cuba, Jamaica, and Porto Rico, with 4,000 slaves annually. That able navigator, Hawkins, in 1562, first sailed to Sierra Leone; and at that time the African trade was considered of such importance in this country, that queen Elizabeth, the ensuing year, sent Hawkins to trade there. He gives an account of their barbarity, and states, that the people were at that time mere slaves. He also mentions, that he found the French trading in that quarter of the world; so that even so early as the latter part of the sixteenth century, the different nations of Europe that had possessions in the West Indies, considered the slave trade as absolutely necessary for the existence of these colonies. It is said that queen Elizabeth gave the first charter, and I believe

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the fact. In 1618, James 1st granted a charter to sir Robert Rich and others. In 1631, Charles 1st granted another; but the troubles opened the trade till 1660. The dreadful events of the civil war, during the latter part of the reign of the unfortunate Charles, and the capture of the island of Jamaica, during the protectorate of Cromwell, are historical facts well known to your lordships. But even these calamities did not annihilate the trade. Upon the capture of Jamaica, Cromwell promised to send a supply of Africans; and highly requisite indeed it was, for the British settlers would not undertake to cultivate the lands in Jamaica, unless encouraged and protected by this promise of the usurper. To confirm the settlers in their opinion of that necessity, those of Barbadoes had, by fatal experience, ascertained the impossibility of carrying on labour in tropical climates by whites. In 1662, Charles 2nd granted a new charter to the African Company; his brother, the duke of York, was at the head of it. In 1665, the company's factors settled at Jamaica. In 1672, another African company was formed, the king himself, the duke of York, prince Rupert, with others, appeared as the patrons, and many of high rank, amongst whom was the celebrated Mr. Locke.—In 1688, the revolution put an end to the company, because all monopolies were contrary to its spirit and principles. In 1698, the first assiento contract was entered into with the Spaniards, and encouraged by king William. In the same year the famous act was passed, "for the protection of that trade, and for the advantage of England, and the preservation of its colonies." This act is considered by the West Indians as their birth-right. Now, my lords, who were the men that passed this famous act? They were those illustrious characters, who secured to this country the happiness of the constitution under which we now live. During the latter part of king William, and the whole of the reign of queen Anne, the parliament from 1707 to 1713, are records to support the trade. Your lordships may recollect the war of succession, carried on in the reign of queen Anne, and that the treaty of Utrecht was the consequence of that war. The commissioners appointed by her majesty for the peace, were the earl of Strafford and the bishop of Winchester. In their instructions, the assiento contract was one of the articles of peace. Queen Anne, in her speech of June 6th, 1712, says, "the apprehension that Spain and the West Indies might be united to France, was the chief inducement to begin this war; and the effectual preventing of such a union was the principle I laid down at the commencement of this treaty. The division of the island of St. Christopher between us and the French, having been the cause of great inconveniency and damage to my subjects, I have demanded to have an absolute cession made to us of that whole island; and France agrees to this demand. But the part which we have borne in prosecuting this war entitling us to some distinction in the terms of peace, I have insisted and obtained, that the assiento or contract for furnishing the Spanish West Indies with negroes, shall be made with us for the term of thirty years, in the same manner as it has been enjoyed by the French for these ten years past."

After these pertinent quotations, I need scarcely farther impress on the minds of my auditors the vast importance of the West India settlements. The treaty to supply the Spaniards with 4,800 negroes annually, lasted till 1750. Upon the peace of 1763, the assiento contract was not renewed; and Mr. Burke wrote in the strongest manner against the impolicy of the peace of 1763, because this country not only neglected to supply the Spaniards, but even the French, with negroes; and in 1765, upon the change of administration, he in his first free-port act, and which has continued to be adopted by the government down to the present moment. It may, be thought singular, that in the latter part of Mr. Burke's life, he should have voted for an abolition of the slave trade; but in his character, like that of many other great men, there are several shades irreconcileable with the prominent features. I perfectly well remember, that when I thought it my duty as a member of parliament to take a decided part in this important business, I had occasion to mention to the right hon. gentleman his change of sentiments. He acknowledged that my observation was just, as referring to his former conduct; and emphatically concluded—"my own words must rise up in judgment against me." I recur to this great and enlightened authority for the rectitude of my position; and if in the vale of life he chose to deviate from his previous principles, sanctioned by

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years and fortified by experience, I have yet to learn the cause of his conversion.

But we shall, my lords, take a more minute survey. At the very moment in which I address your lordships, the state of the African trade is thus: 183 vessels, measuring 49,065 tons, navigated by 6,276 seamen. Having given this account of the African trade, and brought it down to the present moment, I beg leave to call your attention to the Sierra Leone company, who are the petitioners in favour of this bill. Mr. Stevens has informed us, that the object of the company was not so much that of commerce, as a total and complete abolition. While I bestow encomiums on the power of the honesty of his avowal, I implore your particular attention, to the interest of the West-India merchants and planters, who adventure in colonial commerce, on the solemn pledge and honour of the British government. From what I have submitted to your lordships, it is evident that the traffic in slaves is congenial with the manners, laws, and customs of Africa. No wonder, therefore, that the chiefs, princes, and the different native powers of that country, should set their faces against the new settlers at Sierra Leone. Mr. Dawes and Mr. Macaulay, the only two evidences produced at the bar in favour of the bill, are men of the most accommodating memories. Mr. Dawes, does not recollect what both these gentlemen chose to call the Nova Scotia blacks. These blacks were slaves in the American colonies, and promised their freedom by royal proclamation, upon condition of serving the whole war with the army. On the peace of 1783, these negroes were carried to the remaining part of the British settlements in North America, where the government of this country, with great liberality, gave them tools and utensils for the erection of houses and the cultivation of their lands; in addition to these cherishing acts, they were also supplied the first year with twelve months provisions; the second year with a sufficiency for six months; and the third year with what would answer for three months consumption. But in this instance, the fostering hand of government was stretched out in vain; these negroes, after the wanton consumption of the provisions so humanely bestowed upon them, sold their utensils of husbandry, relapsed into a state of idleness and dissipation, and by various stratagems arrived in this country, where they were taken up by the Sierra Leone company, to be transplanted as a colony on their part of the African shore. Can your lordships be surprised, that with all the logical arguments of Mr. Stevens, the learned counsel should be obliged to admit, that the imports from the establishment of the colony of Africa is 4,000*l.* per annum, while their expense is 10,000*l.* Your lordships will observe, that the Sierra Leone company set out with a capital of 250,000*l.*; that Mr. Stevens has laboured to prove, that at present they are worth 50,000*l.*, though I have the strongest reason to believe that they are not worth more than 30,000*l.* By Mr. Stevens's own account, there is an annual deficit of 6,000*l.* a year; so that these great and flourishing colonists, as they wish to be thought, must shortly dissolve partnership, or continue trade at an immense loss.

Considering the manner in which this investigation has been carried on by those noble peers who support the bill, I am confident that if Mr. Mungo Park had been favourable to the abolition of this trade, he would have been brought to your lordships bar. I am, therefore, not a little surprised to hear Mr. Stevens quote certain pages in Mr. Park's very excellent work. And nothing could so completely refute Mr. Stevens's different quotations, as the simple, but elegant and forcible passage, quoted from the same author, by my valuable and learned friend, Mr. Law. The interior of Africa is at best but very little known to Europeans; nor indeed can it be a matter of astonishment, when, with one exception or two, the only occasions on which that coast has been visited by Europeans, were for the purposes of traffic; and it is well known, that on such adventures, the whole time of the merchants and masters of vessels is occupied by objects of commerce. But it is to me highly gratifying, that the undigested and simple account, presented at your lordships bar by the African merchants, agrees with the statement of Mr. Park, relative to the intended prohibited, district. It is therefore but fair to presume, that had Mr. Park, or any other impartial traveller, visited the other parts of the slave coasts, the evidence produced upon the general investigation by the African merchants, would have proved equally true and correct. For the sake of humanity, therefore, my lords, this trade ought to continue; for how many millions of

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lives have been saved in the kingdom of Dahomy; and how much bloodshed has been spared amongst the wretched and miserable victims in that quarter of the globe, thus rescued from the knife!—Mr. Macaulay has given a very minute account on the subject of kidnapping, in which he does not dare to insinuate that the British trader is indirectly concerned. As for wars being the cause of slavery, it is proved by Mr. Park, that whether upon the coast or the interior, so far from that being favourable to the slave trade, in either situation the trade for the time is utterly suspended! therefore it is not the interest of the British trader to encourage wars amongst the natives.

In all climates, where food is easily obtained, cultivation is little attended to. Mr. Park bears strong testimony to that fact. For having been in the East Indies, on mentioning to the inhabitants of the interior of Africa the advantageous uses to which the elephant and bullock are applied on that continent, the natives laughed at him, and observed, that the only beast of burthen was the ass. Whenever a famine arises in any country where cultivation is little known, the consequences must indeed be fatal: and during dearths, Mr. Park mentions several instances of the natives selling themselves for food.—As for crimes being the cause of slavery in Africa, it is, my lords, even no more than the law of this country; for what are the convicts that are annually transported to Botany Bay but slaves? The last cause of slavery in Africa, is the crime of witchcraft. Now, though this country has been for many centuries under the benign influence of christianity, at the close of the last century, people were tried and convicted of witchcraft. Can your lordships, therefore, be astonished, that the wild, ferocious, and ignorant African, should frequently consider persons guilty of a communication with evil spirits?—I have heard that the staple commodity of Africa is slaves. Every other article of commerce, even including ivory, is very small; and many of these articles, it has been satisfactorily proved at your lordships bar, have lain upon the hands of the merchants of this country at a considerable loss. It has been stated by Mr. Macaulay and Mr. Dawes, that the grumattees, or domestic slaves, who attend the caravans of slaves down to the coast, must be in great numbers, in order to carry back the different British manufactures bartered for a ton of ivory. It is a very specious, though a very fallacious argument, in support of the idea intended to be impressed upon your lordships minds by the friends of the bill, that the slave trade is not so materially an object with the natives, as that of other productions in Africa. Mr. Macaulay and Mr. Dawes are obliged to admit, that the ivory brought down to the markets is suspended upon the backs of the slaves for sale, and, consequently, that it cannot be brought down from the interior in any other manner: from my own experience, amongst the Indians in North America, the use of any beast to carry burthens is equally as unknown as in Africa. The reason I take to be the same with the Indians as with the Africans, namely, that the conveyance is water-carriage; and that the Africans, as well as the North American Indians, have only a few carrying places between their great water communication: therefore, it is evident that these goods, bartered in lieu of ivory, are only carried short distances by men, and transported chiefly by water. Far be it from me, my lords, to draw any insidious inference from the evidence of Mr. Macaulay or Mr. Dawes, relative to grumattees, or domestic slaves employed by the colony, notwithstanding that the charter does not permit such a conduct, directly or indirectly; but slavery is so congenial to the laws, habits, and customs of Africa, that even Mr. Park was not able to distinguish the freeman from the slave.

I do not wish to make any wrong impression on the minds of your lordships; but a man less suspicious than myself might have good grounds for insinuating, that some members of the Sierra Leone company view, with an envious eye, the advantageous traffic now carried on between the African and British trader. If the grand object of the company, like every other commercial association, be gain rather than loss, I have a right to think that some of the members lament their exclusion from the slave trade. If there be no cause for this suspicion, why molest and annoy the British trader in the exercise of that traffic, sanctioned for such a long series of years by custom and by parliament? Surveying the subject in this view, I have a right to maintain, that the British legislature, on the passing of the act for incorporating and establishing the Sierra Leone company, renewed and

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confirmed all their former acts in favour of the slave trade. So tender was the parliament of 1790, about the acknowledged right of the British trader to Africa, that fearful of affecting the interest of the West India merchants and planters, by the monopoly or prohibition of the slave trade, they cautiously introduced in the bill, for the establishment of the Sierra Leone company, the following protecting clause: "Provided also, that it shall not be lawful for the said company, either directly or indirectly, to deal or traffic in the buying or selling of slaves, or in any matter whatsoever to have, hold, appropriate, or employ any person or persons, in a state of slavery, in the service of the said company." In another part of the same law is a clause, expressly "securing the British merchants to Africa from the operations of the act." What am I to conclude from this protecting clause, but that the wisdom of parliament, penetrating into futurity, had resolved that all the former acts of the legislature should be respected and confirmed beyond the possibility of a doubt? I confess my astonishment at the presumption of the men calling themselves the Sierra Leone company. They audaciously appear at your lordships bar, and arrogantly insinuate, that you are incapable of deciding on the merits or demerits of an important case of legislation. On the ill-founded plea of humanity, they desire you to relinquish your colonial wealth, the sinews of our commercial existence, and sink into insignificance and contempt in the eyes of Europe and the world, by the adoption of their new system of philosophy and humanity. They call upon you to disfranchise the West India merchants and planters, to depopulate Liverpool, and to deprive some thousands of industrious and respectable men of their birth-right as British subjects.

It has been falsely asserted, that European nations only carry on the slave trade with Africa. Even Mr. Stevens allows, that blacks are carried into Turkey, for the purposes of state, of luxury, and even for the seraglios of Mahometans. As to the fact, I will admit that gentleman to be right; but he is erroneous as to numbers; for, my lords, the numbers annually transported by the Eastern channels to Turkey, to Egypt, to Russia, and to the East Indies, are immense. I will not shock your lordships minds by the horrid cruelties and barbarities which the miserable and devoted wretches experience for the gratification of their Mahomedan and Eastern masters. And here I have a right to draw a contrast between the humanity of the West India traders, and the atrocity of those now described. In one case, we find the milk of human kindness: in the other, acts of turpitude and violence which outrage the sensibilities of nature, and mortify and disgrace mankind. The Portuguese transport 40,000 annually to the Brazils. The French, previous to the revolution, supplied their own islands with negroes from the eastward of the Cape of Good Hope. The Portuguese and native merchants in India, carry on at this time the slave trade through Bombay. Since that period, a tax has been laid upon the importation of negroes into that place by British merchants. I dare say, the East India company were actuated by the most laudable motives, when they imposed a duty upon the importation of negroes in British bottoms; but with all deference to that respectable association, I think it a matter of great national importance, seriously to consider, how far it is prudent to encourage not only the Portuguese, but even the native powers, in efforts for the improvement of navigation, and the consequent increase of seamen, in seas so remote from our home possessions. And here, my lords, I wish to remark, that this observation arises from pure motives of patriotism, as I am fearful of impolicy and danger from such rival powers, when usurping and armed with the authority of the moment.—Permit me, my lords, to illustrate these observations by some additional truths. It is a fact, well known to every British officer of the army and navy who has been at Gibraltar, that the emperor of Morocco has a very large black army within his dominions, the number of which he regularly maintains by sending down armed moors to bring away, by force, the negroes from their wives and families, without the advantage of barter, and without the most distant respect to the customs and manners of the Africans. I shall conclude my remarks on Africa with the memorable words of Mr. Park: "Such are the general outlines of that system of slavery which prevails in Africa; and it is evident from its nature and extent, that it is a system of no modern date. It probably had its origin with remote ages of antiquity before the Mahomedans explored a path across the desert. How

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far it is maintained and supported by the slave traffic, which for 200 years, the natives of Europe, have carried on with the natives of the coast, it is not in my power to explain. If my sentiments should be required concerning the effect which a discontinuance of that commerce would produce on the manners of the natives, I should have no hesitation in saying, that in the present unenlightened state of their minds, the effect would neither be so extensive nor beneficial, as many worthy persons fondly expect."

Having left the African coast, I now come, my lords, to the Middle Passage. I am, and always shall be, a sincere friend to wise and humane regulations in transporting the negroes from Africa to the West Indies. The noble earl (Liverpool), in the year 1788, brought in the first Carrying bill; a very wise and useful measure. Let foreign nations make no regulations for their own vessels, and import into their own islands, disease and discontent amongst the slaves brought from the coast of Africa; we, thank God, are actuated by other considerations than mere gain. We are actuated by principles of humanity. Out of 15,508 negroes, shipped in 1796, 559 died, being about 3½ per cent. According to the new Carrying bill, the above 15,508 negroes will be reduced to 10,252, which is a reduction of one third. Your lordships will therefore perceive, that every attention has not only been paid to the health of the slaves, but by the experience of eleven years, that object has been completely established.

Having now brought your lordships to the West Indies, I trust I may be allowed for a moment to pause, and consider a little who are the West India proprietors: They are our fellow-subjects; they are Englishmen; they are, if not born, at least educated in this country. From local knowledge, and personal experience, I must bear testimony to the affection and to the loyalty they entertain for their king and the mother country. It has been frequently mentioned, whenever this question has been agitated in this House: the riches and flourishing state of the West Indies. I admit it, and rejoice at the fact; and may, therefore, fairly assert, that in a free country, where, thank God, every thing is to be attained by individuals, it cannot be supposed that a West India proprietor pays less attention to the education of his child than any other British subject; and indeed, your lordships know, that the great schools of Eton, Westminster, Harrow, and Winchester, are full of the sons of the West Indians. It would be a reflection indeed, which the right reverend and learned prelates I am sure would contradict, to say, that young men quitting these great public schools, to complete their educations at the seminaries of Oxford and Cambridge, and the universities of Scotland and Ireland, should turn out disgraceful to human nature, and destitute of heart and common feeling. Facts, my lords, speak for themselves: Since the commencement of the French war, three events have arisen in the British West India islands. The first, the Maroon war, in the island of Jamaica. A tribe of Coromantine negroes (part of the Maroons), in amity with the British nation, unjustly made war upon the inhabitants of Jamaica. From the British officers employed in that war, I understand these Maroons, notwithstanding constant intercourse of more than a century with christians, to be totally void of all religion whatsoever; to be completely savage and barbarous, and to go entirely naked, with the exception of short trowsers. Neither have they, though surrounded by the British plantations, shown any degree of cultivation excepting by the provisions which they grow for their own use. During this Maroon war, the slaves on the island of Jamaica remained quiet, peaceable, loyal, and affectionate. The war was soon concluded, and the slaves had the warmest approbation of their masters.—In the island of St. Vincent the second event took place, namely, the Carib war. The Caribs are the aborigines of the country, and were permitted to remain in quiet possession upon the mountains of that island. It was not till the peace of 1763, that St. Vincent was entirely ceded to the king of Great Britain; and the Caribs, previous to this cession to England, having had communication with the French, maintained it during the whole of the peace. The island was consequently captured last war with the assistance of the Caribs; and this war, at the instigation of the French, the Caribs began a new rupture with the British inhabitants of St. Vincent's. Hostilities were fortunately concluded, and the Caribs, since that time, have been removed off the island. During this war, the slaves upon the different estates have remained steady and quiet, and still continue loyal and dutiful to their masters.—

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The third and last event was, I confess an insurrection of slaves in the island of Grenada; but, my lords, it was an insurrection of French slaves belonging to French masters, tainted with French principles; for even at that time the slaves belonging to the British never joined in the revolt, but remained quiet upon the plantations of their owners. I trust that these three material circumstances will bear me out in my assertion respecting the general good treatment of the British planters to their slaves in the West Indies. I may also with truth affirm, that the treatment of the negro slaves in the British islands, is far superior to that of all foreign nations.

In the session of 1707, the House of Commons, presented an address to his majesty, and a circular letter was sent out to the different governors in the British West Indies, to recommend colonial regulations, and to pass different acts of the legislature for the amelioration of slaves. It is with real pleasure I can observe, that the British planters in the different islands have given the most satisfactory answers upon that subject. All the islands indeed have taken some steps, except the island of Dominica, where the assembly happened to be dissolved. And it is but justice to the proprietors of the British West India islands to observe, that all that has been gained upon the subject of the amelioration of the state of the negro is, that that is now made law which before was a universal and established custom. In 1787, the island of Jamaica was in extreme distress for provisions, and the assembly presented an address to the then governor, to induce him to allow supplies to be imported in American vessels. They therein state, that between 1780 and 1787, from the dreadful effects of hurricanes, the negro population was 15,000 short of what it was in 1780. It is true, that upon some estates, the negro population may and does increase; and it is equally clear, that upon many others it rapidly diminishes: consequently the planters are obliged to purchase slaves annually. In the island of Jamaica, a particular friend of mine has two adjoining estates, both in Montego bay. On the one the negroes increase; and on the other, though adjacent, they are obliged, by the decrease of population, to make annual purchases. Some estates in St. Vincent's increase, whilst in Tobago there is little probability of an increase; and as the latter, in most cases, diminish, there is consequently a very great inconvenience. In case the abolition should unfortunately take place, the English planter, more active and more fertile at expedients of commerce than any other, would inevitably, upon those estates that increase in negro population, turn slave-breeder, and then supply different states and different islands. The consequences that have been so often drawn (the tearing of the slave from his country and family), would indeed, in this case, take effect, for the civilized and domiciliated slave would be torn from his family and connexions, to supply the deficiencies on those estates and islands where the negro population does not increase.

All European nations are anxious to wrest this valuable trade out of our hands. I shall not advance as an argument that the French have abolished the trade, because they have at this time no settlements in the West Indies. That is a specious but a weak position. I have every reason to believe, that the motive for the removal of Victor Hugues from Gaudaloupe, by the French Directory, was for the express purpose of re-establishing the slave trade in that island, which, since the passing of the abolition, had been found very beneficial in a state point of view. The new opinions adopted in France, productive of anarchy and confusion, were certainly consonant to the sudden impulse for the abolition. By the circumstances stated, respecting Gaudaloupe, it is evident, that there is a considerable change of opinion on this subject in France: and that opinion has been strongly corroborated by a reference to the policy of the Portuguese, who carry on that trade with great advantage and profit. Much stress has been laid upon the abolition of the trade by the Danes. But I now hold in my hand a bill received this day, drawn upon the Danish consul in this country, in payment for slaves bought so late as the 12th of February last; and it is equally well ascertained, that the Danish factors have, within these last twelve months, returned to the coast of Africa. Some enthusiasts have endeavoured to maintain, that America has abandoned the slave trade; but it is a fact upon record, that the Americans are now carrying it on for the Spaniards; and, notwithstanding an act of abolition has passed the congress, the government of that country is not sufficiently strong to enforce its own laws on this particular

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subject. This spirit of resistance to the American legislature is not a little heightened by the many advantages obtained under the sanction of the Spanish government.

I come now, my lords to the last, though not the least part of the subject namely the importance of the West Indies. In 1788, the British West India capital amounted to seventy millions sterling; employing 689 vessels, 148,176 tons, navigated by 14,000 seamen. The gross duties to the British empire, 1,800,000*l.* In 1796, the trade required 350,230 tons, navigated by 24,000 seamen. If the value of the conquests from the French Spaniards, and Dutch, amounting to at least 20,000,000*l.* be added, I may safely assert, that the present British capital in the West Indies, is equal to 100 millions sterling. A sum which demands your most serious consideration, before you consent to the abolition of that trade without which it could not exist. When I say, that, on the proof of this interesting fact I repose the whole strength of my argument, I am confident that your lordships will pause, and fully weigh the consequences of your vote this evening. I am confident that, as the hereditary guardians of British subjects, you will stretch out your hands to protect, not to destroy: I am confident that, as hereditary counsellors of the crown, you will give life and spirit, instead of dejection and death, to a most loyal description of his majesty's subjects.

Lord *Grenville* observed, that on what had fallen from the illustrious duke he did not mean to comment: between him and that royal personage there could be no personal debate, because between them there was no equality——

Lord *Romney* called to order. He agreed with the noble secretary of state, that personally there was no equality between an illustrious prince and any other member of that House: there could be no equality: personal equality between his royal highness and any other member then in the House, there was none; but he always understood that his majesty, having called any person to a seat in that House, gave him an equality with any other personage in it, as to the right of speaking.

Lord *Grenville* said he was far from taking it unkind, that his noble relation had spoken to order. He was clearly convinced, however, that he had infringed upon no rule of order. He questioned no right of speech in that House: he only said, that between his royal highness and himself, there could be no debate personally, because there was no equality.

Lord *Thurlow* said:—I wish to have it clearly understood, whether it is the constitution of this House, that we are unequal in our right to speak here. I am one of the lowest in point of rank. I contend not for superiority of talent, or for any preference whatever; but I claim to be exactly equal, not only to the illustrious personage who has just spoken, but also with the prince of Wales, if he were present in this House, and acting as a peer of parliament. I know of no difference between peers of parliament, considered in their parliamentary character, and I do think that the lowest in rank in the House is equal to the highest, while we are debating. If rank or talents created an inequality in our right to speak in this House, the illustrious personage who has just spoken would have a higher right than I pretend to have; but I do claim for my humble self, an equality with every prince of the blood, or any other who has a seat in this House to speak my sentiments.

Lord *Grenville* observed, that he was not convinced by what had fallen from either of the two noble lords, and therefore he would proceed to discuss the question on its own merits simply. The first thing which the House had to consider was, the nature of the present bill. Before he came to that point, he would declare generally, that no advantage which individuals, or the public, could derive from the continuance of the slave trade between the coast of Africa and the West Indies, should ever induce him to give it his approbation, or to consider it in any other light than a system of fraud, robbery, and murder. But detestable as that system was, it was not the object of this bill to do it away; it was to prevent its continuance in a particular spot, where it was carried on under circumstances of aggravation tenfold greater than in any other place. The quantity of district from which the bill went to prohibit the trade, was about one-fourth of the whole of the coast on which the trade was carried on. It could not therefore be contended, that the trade would be so far injured as to stop those supplies which the colonies were said to stand in need of; but still less could such a proposition be maintained, after it had appeared in evidence at their

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lordships' bar, that the number of slaves annually exported from this district amounted to little more than 3,000, making only one-twentieth part of all the slaves carried away from the coast of Africa during the course of a year in British ships. It was extremely important for their lordships to consider what was the cause of this comparatively small number. It was proved from the evidence, that it was owing to the depopulation of the country, in consequence of the numbers of slaves that had been carried away from this coast, because it lay nearer to the West Indies than the other coasts. If any noble lord doubted this depopulation, let him but recollect that part of the evidence which stated, that the ships which stopped to take up slaves at this coast spent some months longer in completing their voyage than the vessels that went farther off; and that this was caused by their being obliged to wait so long a time before they could complete their cargoes.—Now with regard to the injury which it was said the colonies would sustain from stopping the trade on this district, he would again call their lordships attention to the evidence, which stated, that not one of the 3,000 slaves annually exported from this coast, were carried to any of our West India possessions which were the property of West India merchants; but that they were for several years sold at Demarara, and some places on the coast of America. Therefore if the House should pass the present bill, the people in the West Indies would not know, except by report, that such a law existed. It was evident, therefore, that the restriction from trading on this coast could neither injure our colonies, nor materially affect the persons immediately concerned in the trade. But there were other parties whose interests deserved to be consulted as much as those concerned in the slave trade. This was the Sierra Leone company; a company which originated from the purest principles of philanthropy, and which was highly deserving of praise and encouragement. One of the counsel who had lately appeared at the bar against this bill, spoke in a sneering manner of this company, and of the feeble attempts it had made in producing any articles of trade. But he would ask noble lords, whether any of those colonies, which were now rich and flourishing states in America, had in the space of fifty years after their first establishment, made a greater progress than the Sierra Leone company had done in the space of seven years? Was it nothing that this company had imported ivory into Great Britain, and were likely to carry that trade to a considerable extent? Was it nothing that they had discovered a dye which could colour a much finer blue than indigo? Was it nothing that the company had cultivated cotton, which promised to be very productive? But, upon this part of the subject, it had been argued by counsel, that this cultivation of cotton would injure the planters in the West Indies. If any noble lord suffered such an argument to weigh with him for a moment, he would inform him, that such was, at this moment, the scarcity of cotton, that manufacturers could not carry on their business for want of it. In short, the Sierra Leone company had made efforts that promised hereafter to be of the most essential benefit to this country. There was no part of the globe on which it was not possible to produce things useful for man. Africa, which was hitherto regarded only for the purpose of being pillaged and desolated, possessed all these natural advantages in common with other parts of the world. All that was now required of the House was, that it would sanction a measure which had for its object, not only the improvement of such advantages under the care of this highly valuable body of men he was speaking of, but also to rescue from the most dreadful calamities a country that had long been a prey to rapine and cruelty. Was this country capable of being improved? It was. And the negroes were capable of civilization. Let any noble lord, who wished to satisfy himself on the subject, read the account of Mr. Park's travels, and there he would find, that those people who lived in the interior of the country were in a state of civilization; that they cultivated land, and that they were capable of practising all the social virtues, and all those acts of hospitality and kindness which would do honour to the most polished societies. Very different, however, was the situation of the countries bordering on the coasts. All history proved, that wherever a trade was carried on in slaves, that country must be in a state of barbarism. In the first or second page of Thucydides, it would be found that at one time all the states of Greece which bordered on the sea, were in an uncivilized and savage state, because in those places a trade had been carried on

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in slaves; and such was also the case with our own island at the time the Romans invaded it. In like manner, the country which was now the object of discussion, was in the most dreadful state, in consequence of this nefarious and bloody traffic; in the course of which captains of ships had fraudulently swept away whole families. Some of these captains had lately appeared at the bar as witnesses—the first instance he had seen of persons swearing on a question in which they were interested. Four of them swore that it was absolutely necessary for ships trading to the Leeward coast to stop at the prohibited district for provisions, and that they had stopt there. By his directions their log-books were brought forward on the following day, when it appeared that they had not stopped on this coast; and that, so far from its being necessary to stop, not above one or two ships out of 100 had stopped there. He would not express what he felt on this occasion; but if their lordships, at the time these men gave their evidence, had been sitting in a judicial instead of a legislative capacity, he was confident they would have adopted a proceeding different from what they had done. He would mention another fact, to show the peculiar cruelty of trading to this coast: on account of the length of time that elapsed before the ships completed their cargoes of slaves, a mortality to an extraordinary extent always took place amongst these unhappy wretches, whose fate he would call by no other name than that of murder. Such were the deplorable scenes which this country exhibited—this country, whose bleeding wounds the present bill proposed to heal. No consideration of interest should induce that House for a moment to delay this act of justice, if the argument of interest could be urged with any truth; but it could not; for it had been proved, that the trade whose abolition was sought for, was productive of very little interest, but of great calamity.

The Earl of *Westmorland* said:—After all the abuse and the clamour which, both in and out of parliament, have been thrown upon the slave trade, with great embarrassment, I should offer myself to your lordships to oppose this measure, if I did not feel that there was a duty superior to such considerations—a duty to protect the rights, the property, the interests of the subjects of England, the commerce of the merchants, the property of the planters of the West-Indies, whilst at the same time, I feel that I am neither deserting the cause of humanity nor the cause of the natives of Africa.—It has been the practice upon this occasion to endeavour to work upon your lordships passions, by animated descriptions of the miseries of the slave trade and slavery, paying no great respect to your lordships by insinuating that such pictures were necessary to rouse your feelings. But, in my judgment, the time would have been better spent if it had been employed in showing in what manner the bill before us would tend to remedy any one of the enormities complained of. After, however, all the abuse which has been poured upon this subject, I trust I shall not give offence, if, in wiping the blood and dirt from my own face, I should happen to scatter it a little around me; and if this celebrated Sierre Leone company, these *amis des noirs*, these dealers in ivory and benevolence, at the expense of the blood and treasure of other men, shall feel a little the effect of the rebound, and shall not appear in that light, either of humanity or disinterestedness, in which they would wish to describe themselves.

It is, my lords, a peculiar satisfaction to me to see an attendance of the reverend bench, the respect and dignity of whose characters must always give consideration and weight; and I rely upon having their support in resisting a measure which I shall show to be only, under specious pretences, an organization of bloodshed, and a bounty upon enormities.

This bill is to limit the trading in slaves from a certain part of the Coast of Africa, for the purpose of supporting the Sierra Leone company, and introducing civilization and English manufactures; but it has, in truth, no such object, nor do its provisions at all tend to that point. It is only under certain specious pretences, to induce your lordships to adopt the principle of abolition, with a view to lead to the abolition of the slave trade, and, as a certain corollary, the abolition of the negro-slavery in the West-Indies. About ten years ago the House of Commons sent up to your lordships certain resolutions for the abolition of the slave trade. Your lordships, with that humanity which has distinguished you upon all occasions, passed regulations for the conduct of that trade. But the question of abolition struck your lordships as of serious im-

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portance: you hesitated, you went into an inquiry; and, in having given no answer, you have in a manner negatived those propositions, and I do not see with what consistency you can adopt this measure of abolition in part, when the investigation is unfinished. The question of abolition seemed to involve serious interests and doubts; but nothing seemed more to require investigation than, Whether the abolition would in the slightest degree serve the cause of humanity in Africa? With this view it was essential to know what was the state of Africa; for, my lords, it was possible that such might be the conditions of the persons who are the object of this traffic, that the transportation to the West Indies might be the sparing of human blood, and an amelioration of their condition.

It may be supposed that the slaves consist generally of three descriptions of persons; slaves by birth, slaves by war, and slaves by conviction of crimes. I trust it requires no great eloquence to show that it may be possible to a slave, subject to a brutal and savage master, over whom there is no control, who has the power of life, and death, and fortune —it might be an amelioration of his condition to be conveyed to the West Indies, put under the protection of the English laws, and have an opportunity of being instructed in the blessings of the Christian religion. Less time would it require to prove that, in the case of convicts and prisoners of war, it would serve the cause of humanity, by sparing the lives of those who would otherwise be put to death. But here it is said, that both the wars and convictions are made for the purpose of acquiring slaves. With respect to convictions, how can it be known? Your information must come from the slave; and even in this country, persons found guilty are not always satisfied with their verdict. As to wars, can it be conceived that wars are undertaken solely for the purpose of making slaves? Other causes of war exist in human nature; in Europe we make not slaves of our prisoners, and yet, at this moment is Europe deluged in blood by a war, made upon the pretence of serving the rights of man and the cause of humanity.—The question, then, of humanity, as far as regards Africa would appear, to say the least, exceedingly doubtful; but I would give up that part of the argument, I would allow every cruelty, every enormity, that ever has been invented, exaggerated, or circulated, and I beg to ask, having done so, what single step is gained towards the cause of humanity by this bill in particular, or any other that has been thought of, whilst the trade is carried on by other nations?

But other nations have given up the trade. The French have given it up:

> Jam nova progenies cælo demittitur alto
> Hic et, si qua manent sceleris vestigia nostri
> Irrita perpetua solvent formidine terras.

Are we to take example from France? Are we to learn mercy from the bathings in the Loire, or humanity from the Place at Lyons? Are they to make amends to God and man for their atrocities in Europe by their kindness to the natives of Africa? True it is, that the first instruments by which that unfortunate country was involved in its horrors and desolations, was by the *amis des noirs* working on the minds of the people upon this subject: let the smoking plains of St. Domingo speak the humanity of these agitators. But is it reasonable to suppose that whenever peace shall come, and this country shall have engrossed every other trade, those tygers in human frame will not seize a lucrative trade which we should have relinquished? — Next the Americans: they have abolished the slave trade. Perhaps so: and this makes the strongest argument to my mind against this bill. For read any voyage or travel in Africa, attend to every witness at the bar, and you are constantly shocked by accounts of American slave ships, who, without any control, are guilty of cruelties and improprieties. But will the king of Spain stop the working of his mines to please the Sierra Leone company? Will the Portuguese stop the cultivation of the Brazils? Will the Dutch, the Danes, the Swedes, the Germans, the Hamburghers? Nay more, the Irish (but I shall speak to that presently) give up the trade to please the Sierra Leone company? And if they all would, would the Mahometans? Would the deys of Tunis and Algiers, the beys of Egypt, quit the purchase of slaves to please the Sierra Leone company? What, then, is the effect of your regulations? That you throw these persons from a situation where you can regulate and preserve their health in the passage, can protect them in the West Indies by your laws, and throw them into the hands of those over whom you have no control; or is it that

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a Portuguese slave captain is more merciful than an English one? Or that working in the mines of Spain is more salubrious than the plantations of Jamaica?

But here it has been said, "let us relieve ourselves from this trade, if other nations carry it on, let the blood be on their heads." [A loud hear! from lord Holland.] I am glad my arguments please the noble lord; for my part, I admire not much that humanity that consists in spilling the blood and increasing the miseries of those whom you profess to protect. If, then, the question of the operation towards the cause of humanity is doubtful, and all your regulations are perfectly nugatory and inefficient, does it not become us to look to its operations towards ourselves, and to its effects on our islands? What then seems the general admission of persons most conversant on this subject? That without an import of negroes your islands could not increase their cultivation. That they could not preserve their present state and cultivation without an import of negroes. That the abolition would stop a very great trade and the export of your manufactures."—It has been said, "that negroes can be raised cheaper and better than they can be purchased," and as to the trade, that "it is a bad trade, a losing trade," that "the capital may be turned to a more beneficial and lucrative channel;" but the merchants and manufacturers humbly at your bar solicit you to allow them to continue a trade with the profits of which they are satisfied; to be allowed to maintain their families, and not to be turned from that course of life, in which they have earned their livelihood, to seek their bread in a new line of business they do not understand. With regard to the import of slaves, the planters almost unanimously agree, that the abolition would be ruinous to them. Are you aware, my lords, of the effects of the agitation of this question? The papers on the table show you what a spirit is rising in the colonies upon this subject; convinced that these measures strike at the existence of their property, can you be surprised at their passions being irritated upon it? Have you well weighed the effects of this agitation on the black population of these colonies? Shall I be told that this law does not affect them; make allowance for the distance, make allowance for exaggeration and misstatement. When the government, when even clubs in France attempted to take part with and take up the cause of our people, did we not all see the dangerous consequences? What must be the feeling of the negroes when they are convinced that the government, the legislature of this country consider them as unjustly made slaves, as unjustly retained, and that the people of England have taken up their cause against their masters? Are you aware of the value of what you put to risk? From 70 to 100 millions of property, 4 millions of export, 8 millions of import, from 3 to 4 millions of revenue; shipping, sailors, and all the other advantages of this trade; and would you put in doubt and question the work of centuries of industry and speculation, for the sake of the Sierra Leone company? Are we to alarm, to agitate, to sacrifice to false and exaggerated statements, to false and mistaken notions of humanity, to the Sierra Leone company, those colonies that have resisted the military exertions of ancient France and ancient Spain, and all the efforts of republican anarchy and republican fanaticism?—I shall, however, be told that they are alarmed without reason, that this bill does not affect them, that it has none of the consequences I apprehend. I think it has; I think it is the first step; but if I was convinced it had not, that they were alarmed without sufficient reason, still I should consider it equally unwise and impolitic to alarm the fears of good and loyal subjects, to alienate their affections, and to irritate their minds, at a moment when all our exertions are necessary to preserve us from the dangers with which we are threatened. It is far from my wish to agitate delicate questions, but very serious ones arise out of this bill. First, my lords, it stirs the question of internal legislation in the colonies: this is a most important point, and what I think you would hardly agitate to please the Sierra Leone company. What is the next point? May I ask does, or does not, this bill legislate for Ireland; I conceive it cannot, then the bill is nugatory: but this, too, is a question you would hardly raise to please the Sierra Leone company.

This bill professes to exclude the trade in slaves from certain parts of the coast, for the purpose of introducing civilization and English manufactures into Africa. How far the idea of altering the manners and customs of kingdoms larger than Europe, by a miserable settlement on the coast, is worthy of a serious answer, I

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shall leave to your lordships decision. We will suppose, however, one of this company to apply to a Liverpool merchant —he complains of the interruption by the slave trade, "we want a little territory, an arrondissement of our settlement, that we may carry on our commerce without competition." Well, how much do you want? 300 leagues of coast. How much inland? To the Mediterranean; that where the best slaves are to be purchased, the cheapest, the shortest passage, the least loss in the voyage; where ships generally call and can best be supplied with provisions, and where African sailors may be obtained to preserve the lives of the European sailors from the unhealthiness of the climate; and all this for the sake of humanity! When noble lords talk of humanity, I wish they would consider a little the humanity of encouraging this settlement; they would take into consideration the number of persons who have been consigned to death by these merciful hands in this settlement of misery and disease. Nearly two-thirds of the unfortunate persons who went there died in the first years, and this sickness not accidental, for by the last account I have seen published by these gentlemen in 1797, the sickness and mortality still continues greater than any year except the first. "If I give you these 300 leagues of coast, will you be satisfied?" No; my object is to destroy your trade entirely. And if he had said yes, the merchant might reply, "I should not give you much credit, as the clause and condition in your charter is specifically to prevent your interfering with other traders; by this act you wish to exclude us."

Let ut come to the encouragement of this colony, and the introduction of English manufactures. How the abolition of the slave trade is to have the effect of introducing English manufactures, I do not very distinctly see; for it seems a curious way of introducing manufactures, and increasing trade, by excluding the principal article of trade and the staple of the country. However, I will admit this, and let us see how it operates. It is universally allowed that the English, by their superior skill, capital and credit, excel every other nation, and in short drive them from the trade. What, then, is the consequence of the English being excluded from this territory? That of course every other nation will croud where they do not meet with rivals who are superior to them. In fact, therefore, you increase the demands for slaves and the slave trade, within this district. If there is any truth in the stories, which are told, you will, with the demand increase the enormities; and how will the slaves be paid for? By foreign manufactures. Then what is the effect of your law? That within the district you mean to preclude, you will increase the trade and the enormities of which you complain, and can in no degree regulate; and with respect to the English manufactures, the trade will be carried on to the exclusion of English and introduction of foreign manufactures;—such is the natural operation. But, however, my lords, I will allow this company to be a little more sanguine, and carry their views farther. I will allow this great company, these emperors of the world, who measure their empire by degrees and *lines* of the globe, to issue their orders and to be obeyed by all the princes of Europe, not to touch within their imaginary line, notwithstanding the Dutch, the Danes, the French, the Portuguese, have forts and factories within this district. I will go farther; they shall order and be obeyed. The princes of Africa, whose names, districts, countries, they know not of, whom I cannot better describe than in the words of Lucan, "*et gens si qua jacet nascenti conscia Nilo*,"—the dey of Algiers, the Mahometans of the borders of the desart, the beys of Egypt, and the emperor of Turkey, not to allow any slaves to be marched from these countries, or to be brought from or into their dominions; all of whom are now in the habit of purchasing slaves from these districts. The most sanguine colonist could not desire more than this; what would be the effects? Why, within the protected district the slaves taken in war, and the convicts would be put to death. That this would be the case, appears from the evidence at the bar; but I want no witness to prove this; when I know what the state of Africa is, composed of small hostile tribes in the lowest state of barbarism, of different religions and languages, there must be frequent wars; and where there are no regular establishments to guard and maintain prisoners, no parole of honour to exchange, the history of mankind is undeniable to this point; what can the savage do to debarrass himself of his prisoner but put him to death? In respect to the rest of Africa, as the same demand will exist for slaves in more confined limits, accord-

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ing to the reasons assigned, the pretended enormities will increase with the increased demand. What then is the effect of this bill, according to the most sanguine expectation? That within your own imaginary dominions which you wish to protect, you will cause cruelty and slaughter, and in the other parts of Africa you will increase the demand for slaves, and every atrocity and enormity you complain of.

It has been talked of as a gradual abolition, but it cannot be considered in that light, as, except that it embarrasses, these regulations do not affect this point. Respecting the islands, it seemed to be argued, that a stop to this trade was necessary, in consequence of the danger from the too great increase of black population; and this is, no doubt, a subject that well deserves your serious consideration. Let me place this in your lordships view. First, will you prevent the farther cultivation of your islands? Next, will you decree your colonies to decline? Are you resolved to pay to other countries great sums, for cotton, coffee, indigo, and other articles your own colonies and subjects would produce? When you sold the lands and received the money from your subjects in your French conquests, particularly St. Vincent's, did you stipulate, that the purchasers should not be permitted to cultivate them? I state these things strongly, not that, perhaps, it may be necessary, but that your lordships may see the subject in its proper light. For I hold there exists in every state a power, when political necessity demands, to make both public and individual sacrifices for its immediate protection. I have always conceived by all writers on the law of nations, that a state has a right to waste its frontiers for its defence; hereafter may arise questions of indemnity. But what I desire is that we may look at the subject in all its views, in all its bearings; and that if such a political necessity exists, that we may calculate our risk, that we may calculate our danger: that we may calculate at the same time the public and private injury, the public and private mischief; that we may act upon a considered comparison of these different reasonings, and not act upon it in a concealed manner to please the Sierra Leone company.

Lord *Holland* said, that all the evil consequences which the opposers of the bill predicted would ensue from its being carried into effect, were a repetition of the arguments which had so often been advanced, but as often refuted, against the total abolition of the slave trade. That was a measure which, he would always maintain, justice, humanity, and policy demanded; but he had not to argue on that ground at present, and would therefore confine himself to the present measure. It had been said that the West India slaves were in a better situation than in their own country; but he could not conceive why we should pretend to decide what was best for an African. He did not believe there was any thing in nature which prevented the people of that country from judging for themselves, with regard to their own interests: it had been proved that they were unwilling to be removed. It was next said, that the prisoners taken in war would be killed if they were not sold; but if there were no means of selling them, would the petty tyrants of Africa be so anxious to make prisoners, as, from Mr. Park's book, it appeared they were? Our West India colonies were very precarious possessions. It had been declared by very great authority in another place (Mr. Pitt), that unless some alteration took place with regard to the slave trade, their safety would be endangered; and it was remarkable that those who so implicitly believed his majesty's ministers upon every other subject, should refuse to believe him on this. If these possessions were insecure, would it not be prudent to prepare another market from which we might procure the same productions?

The Bishop of *Rochester* said:—My lords; I hope I shall not trespass too long upon your time; as I mean to confine myself, as far as the course the debate has taken will permit, to the narrow limits of the question which is immediately before the House—the bill upon the table; a subject quite distinct from the general question of abolition. Not, my lords, that my mind shrinks from the difficulty and magnitude of that general question: the time, I trust, is at no great distance, when I shall rise before your lordships to arraign the injustice and impolicy of that nefarious traffic;—injustice which no considerations of policy can extenuate; impolicy, equal in degree to the injustice. And I shall not be deterred from going openly into this discussion, from the danger supposed to attend the measure, and the very agitation of the question, at this season, arising from the particular complexion of the times. I know well that

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the advocates for the slave trade have long endeavoured to represent the project of abolition as a branch of Jacobinism; with which it is no more connected than it is with the religion of the Persees. My lords, we who contend for the abolition proceed upon no visionary notions of equality and imprescriptible rights of men; we strenuously uphold the gradations of civil society: but we do indeed affirm, that those gradations both ways, both ascending and descending, are limited. There is an exorbitance of power to which no good king will aspire; and there is an extreme condition of subjection to which man cannot without injustice be degraded; and this, we say, is the condition of the African carried away into slavery. But as to any danger attending the measure of abolition at this particular season, I shall contend, when that question comes before you, that the danger is all on the other side; that the present times imperiously demand the abolition; that the continuance of the slave trade threatens new and increased dangers to civil society; and that the continuance of it, rather than the abolition, is to be dreaded, as a probable means of setting a new edge upon the reeking knife of St. Domingo.

But, my lords, this is not to the present purpose; the question of abolition is not before you: the present bill is only to abolish the trade upon a certain portion of that coast on the whole of which it is at present exercised; in order to remove certain obstacles which the slave trade carried on upon that part of the coast throws in the way of the colony of Sierra Leone. My lords, the part of the coast upon which the bill prohibits the trade is described to be that which lies west of a line drawn due north from the southernmost part of Cape Palmas. Cape Palmas, your lordships know, is a point upon the coast of Africa, where the Grain coast on the west and the Tooth coast on the east meet in an angle. It lies in the latitude of five degrees, at least above 4½ degrees, north; and, as the coast is laid down by D'Anville, as nearly as may be under the meridian of Gibraltar; but, according to the new map made by major Rennell from Mr. Park's Travels, it lies about 2½ degrees west of the meridian of Gibraltar; and of course, the line drawn due north from this Cape strikes into the ocean again a very little to the north of Cape Blanco.* This bill, therefore, goes to prohibit the trade completely upon the whole of what is called the Windward Coast. I believe that the extent of the coast which the bill will cut off was fairly enough stated, by the witnesses against the bill, to be 300 leagues or more, and to make about one-third of the whole coast on which British ships exercise the trade. But we are not to conclude that this bill, interdicting the trade on one-third of the whole extent of coast, goes to extinguish one-third part of the trade; it is no such thing, my lords: the proportion of the trade that will be abolished by this bill will be very inconsiderable indeed,—I believe, indeed, nothing; for though the prohibited district is one-third part of the whole, the proportion of slaves from this part of the coast is very small indeed. Mr. Olderman told your lordships, that before the war it was one-third part of the whole; Mr. Branker said that it was about one-fourth part: but now, my lords, at the present, it is so reduced as to be not more than one-twentieth part. Mr. Branker says, the whole number of slaves now exported in a year from the coast of Africa is 57,000; and that of these, not more than 4,000 are taken from the windward coast: afterwards, I think, he came down to 3,000 as the number from the windward coast; and by putting together all the evidence, there is no reason to think that the number now taken from the windward coast in the year is more than 2,000. One twentieth, therefore, is the utmost proportion of the trade which this bill will abolish. But, my lords, I say it will not do so much as that; it will not abolish an atom of the general trade. The witnesses have said that the reduction of the trade upon the Windward Coast has been owing to the war. I do not believe it: there are many facts, in the comparison of the slave trade of this country with that of other nations, which prove that the war can have had no such operation. But from some cause or other, and I care not from what, the trade upon the Windward Coast has been reduced almost to nothing. It appears from the evidence against the bill, that, whilst the trade has been thus sinking upon the

* Not that Cape Blanco which is generally considered as the northernmost limit of the British slave trade; but another, much farther to the north, upon the coast of Fez, and nearly upon the parallel of the island of Porto Santo.

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Windward Coast, it has been growing upon the Leeward; for the whole annual number of 57,000 very greatly exceeds the total of the annual export before the reduction on the Windward Coast. Now, my lords, since I find in fact, that the reduction upon the Windward Coast, from whatever cause it has proceeded, has been accompanied with such an increase of the trade in the other part as has vastly overbalanced the deficit from that reduction,—have I not a right to conclude, that any farther diminution which may be produced to windward by this bill will be more than overpaid by an increase upon the unprohibited parts; and so the total of the trade will remain at least undiminished? If this be a just conclusion,—and I am sure it is the just and necessary conclusion from the evidence,—if any policy—the contrary is my opinion; but if any policy persuade the continuance of the trade, there is nothing in this bill contrary to such policy; for this bill leaves the trade, in its generality, such as it finds it. If any humanity calls for the continuance of the trade (for such an argument has been attempted), this bill cramps not the generous efforts of that humanity; for not a slave less, upon the whole, will be taken in the year from one part or another of Africa.

I heard with joy and satisfaction the statement of the prosperity of the West India islands: I rejoice that the empire possesses such a fund of wealth in that quarter. But my lords, if the prosperity of the West India Islands is at all connected with the slave trade,—if it depends upon the numbers annually exported from Africa,—it will not be in the smallest degree endangered by this bill; by which the slave trade will not be affected, the numbers will not be abridged. And so the West India planters themselves seem to think, by the perfect indifference they have shown about this bill. Do your lordships imagine you have had the great body of West India planters at your bar, petitioning against the bill? No such thing. We had something like a petition from the single island of Jamaica: the gentleman residing here in the character of agent for that island presented a petition against the bill. A learned counsel appeared for that petition at the bar, and he produced witnesses: and much was I astonished at the sort of witnesses he produced,—I was quite puzzled with it. Three witnesses were called. The first was a gentleman who told your lordships he had resided in Jamaica twenty years: he had an estate of his own; and he managed some other estates: for his own estate, he had purchased, in the twenty years, 200 slaves in all; and of these 200 eleven were purchased as slaves from the Windward Coast; but he was cheated in two of them, for two of the eleven turned out not to be from the Windward Coast: he had therefore purchased in all, in the space of twenty years, nine slaves from the Windward Coast, and no more. This seemed to me an extraordinary evidence to prove the importance of the import from the Windward Coast to the island of Jamaica. The second of the three witnesses had resided some time in Jamaica, not as a planter, but as a merchant: he had resided in that part of the island where he had the least opportunity of acquiring any knowledge of the import; for he resided in the north part of the island: he had been concerned in the sale of three cargoes, and no more; and from what part of the coast of Africa the slaves sent to Jamaica might come, or what proportion might come from the Windward Coast, he told your lordships plainly he knew nothing. The last witness of the three was called only to prove the present average price of a prime slave in the island of Jamaica; and he was not asked a single question about the import. My lords, I was very much astonished at this sort of evidence. One witness proved that the proportion of windward slaves purchased by him was next to nothing; and a second could give your lordships no information at all upon the subject of the import; and the third was not called to that point. I very much suspected some mystery lay at the bottom of this. My lords, the mystery was soon cleared up, when the log-books were exhibited; for by them it appears that the slaves from the Windward Coast in general are not carried to Jamaica, but to other islands; and one of the slave-captains, when he spoke of the preference given to the Windward Coast slaves, excepted the island of Jamaica,—where, he said, the slaves from Bonney are preferred. My lords, they are so much preferred, that the Jamaica planters refuse the Windward Coast cargoes: they will not take slaves from the windward, if they can procure those of another part. The island of Jamaica, therefore, is not at all interested in the event of this bill, since the trade which it will cut off makes

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no part of the supply of that island; and yet this island, is the only one of the West India islands that has petitioned against it. My lords, I have a right to conclude, that the great body of the West India planters are not adverse to this bill; and if they are not adverse to it, it must be because they are sensible that their supply will not be diminished by it.—Then, my lords, for the good town of Liverpool,—if the prosperity of Liverpool depends upon the slave trade, it will not be affected by this bill; which will leave the slave trade, in its total amount, just as it found it.—But your lordships have been told that this bill, professing only to abolish the trade within certain limits, in effect will destroy the whole trade, by the difficulties which will be laid upon it; for it is pretended, that ships cannot trade even to the Leeward Coast without taking in provisions upon the Windward Coast. My lords, the answer is, first, that if the allegation were true, that provisions must be taken in upon the Windward Coast, this bill forbids not but that any ship may stop upon the Windward Coast for the purpose of taking in provisions; but, secondly, the allegation, though made by witnesses upon oath, is false—absolutely false; the oaths of these witnesses are falsified by the deposition of the log-books. A ship's log-book, your lordships know, is the authentic record of the occurrences of her voyage, which must bear down all other evidence; and by an extract from the log-books, it appears, that out of 100 ships which sailed from the port of Liverpool to the Leeward Coast in the years 1791 and 1797, one ship only took in provisions upon the Windward Coast.

So much for that part of the case. Again, it is pretended, that the bill prohibits the trade in that part where it may be prosecuted with the greatest advantage; that the time of the voyage from the Windward Coast to the west is shorter in a very great proportion than the time of the passage from the Leeward Coast; and that, in consequence of the brevity of the voyage, the mortality is less and the slaves arrive in better health. This would be a consideration of great importance, were it true; but it is all pretence and fiction. My lords, in exposing the falsehood, I shall not avail myself in argument of the vile deception which these witnesses upon oath audaciously attempted to practise upon this House, by smuggling the time of the tedious delay upon the Windward Coast to collect the cargoes. The cargoes are not collected but in a long time upon the Windward,—upon the Leeward Coast they are completed presently; and when the time of detention upon the coast is added to the time of the Middle Passage, the voyage from the Windward turns out to be the longest of the two, and if the quickest voyages are the most healthy, the voyages from the Leeward ought to be the healthiest. But, my lords, I wave this: I will take the comparative length of the voyage (I mean the length in time) as they themselves have stated it; and I will show your lordships, that this pretended healthiness of the passage from the Windward Coast is all a fallacy. My lords, I assert that the very healthiest of the ships are nothing better than pestilential gaols! I assert, that in the healthiest of their ships, upon their shortest passages, the rate of mortality is enormous—the waste of human life prodigious, monstrous, shocking to the imagination! This, my lords, I assert; and I will prove my assertion by their own statements. My lords, Mr. Robert Hume made several voyages from different parts of the coast of Africa to the West Indies; and he has given his account, upon his oath, of the time of each voyage, the total of his cargo, and the number of the deaths in each. In 1792, Mr. Hume made a voyage from the Windward Coast to Jamaica. He made it in thirty-three days; he shipped upon the coast of Africa 265 slaves; and twenty-three died in the Middle Passage. Twenty three out of 265, in thirty-three days! Thirty-three days are, as nearly as may be, one eleventh of a year: and eleven times twenty-three is 253; and this would have been his loss by death, had the passage lasted a whole year! The man would have lost within a very few of his whole cargo!—Now, the importation of slaves above the age of 25 is prohibited, in the West Indies, by the colonial laws. I must therefore assume, that this cargo of Mr. Hume's was composed of persons not above the age of 25 years. My lords in this town of London, the rate of mortality, by the most approved tables which all calculators use, is not, at the age of 25, more than 17 in 1,000 in the year: out of 1,000 persons living, of the age of 25, seventeen and no more die in the town of London in a year;—In Mr. Hume's ship, 253 out of 265! My lords, in 1795, Mr. Robert Hume made a

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voyage from the Gold Coast of St. Vincent's. The mortality was nothing like that of the former voyage; and this is one curious instance, in confirmation of what was argued by the noble secretary of state, that, when the depositions of these gentlemen are properly corrected, by supplying material circumstances which they, witnesses upon oath, concealed, the voyages from the Leeward Coast turn out to be the healthiest. So it was, upon the comparison of these two voyages of Mr. Hume,—his voyage to Jamaica in 1792, and this voyage to St. Vincent's in 1795: the latter, though from the Leeward Coast, was far the healthiest. And yet, even in this healthier voyage, the rate of mortality was enormous. The cargo consisted of 215 slaves: the vessel was seven weeks and four days in her passage; and the deaths in that time, Mr. Hume said, were three or four. Three or four died, out of 215, in seven weeks and four days. Seven weeks and four days make about one-seventh of the whole year; and seven times three or four is twenty-one or twenty-eight: the mean, in round numbers, is 24: 24 therefore would have died out of the 215, if the ship had been the whole year upon the Middle Passage: 24 therefore out of 215 was the rate of mortality in this ship, the rate at London, for persons of the like age, being only 17 in 1,000.—In 1796, Mr. Hume made a voyage from Cape Mount to Jamaica, in 31 days. His whole cargo was 230; of which one only died in the Middle Passage. One out of 230 in 31 days; again, my lords, an enormous rate of mortality. Take the 31 days as a month: then twelve out of 230 in the year was the rate of mortality in this ship; instead of 17 out of 1,000, the London rate.

I shall trouble your lordships with but one instance more; and that shall be the instance of the ship Plumper of Liverpool. Your lordships are already well acquainted with the story of the Plumper. You will recollect,—it is in evidence,—that there is a great peculiarity in the negro constitution; that it is particularly conducive to the health of the negro to be close shut up in foul air. This is death to us white men, as we know by the experiment of the Black-Hole, and other tragical instances; but for your negro, it is the reverse: keep him but hot enough, he will always do well: and the better, the more you try to stifle him. Now, my lords, the good ship Plumper was built upon this very principle; and the extraordinary healthiness of her voyage was alleged as a fact, to evince the folly of the regulations we have made to prevent the negro from being poisoned in the Middle Passage, as we idly fear, in the steams of his own person. In the Plumper, care was taken that the slaves should have no room to stir or breathe; she was a single-decked ship: and the height in the hold was no more than two feet seven inches: in this vessel 140 slaves were stowed; and of these there died in the passage only two. Two out of 140. The time of the passage is not stated in Mr. Coxe's account: but it appears that the vessel was small not exceeding 84 tons burthen. These small vessels are not employed in the Leeward Coast trade; they are sent only to the Windward Coast: I have a right, therefore, to assume, that this small vessel slaved upon the Windward Coast; and I shall deal very fairly by her, if I allow for the time of her Middle Passage what has been stated by the witnesses to be the average time of the Middle Passage from the Windward Coast to the West Indies. Now, my lords, Mr. John Olderman, an experienced slave captain, has told you, that the average of the passage from the Windward Coast to the West Indies, is thirty days. Allowing therefore this average time to the ship Plumper for her Middle Passage, it was in thirty days that two of her slaves died out of 140. Two in thirty days, is twenty-four in the whole year; 24, therefore, out of 140 in the year, was the rate of mortality in this ship; instead of 17 out of 1,000, the London rate. Part of this excessive mortality is, I doubt not, to be ascribed to the provision that was made, in the construction of the vessel, to secure to the negroes the full advantage of the want of air: but upon this circumstance I lay no stress;—I maintain, that when the rate of mortality is examined upon true principles, it is so enormous, in the very best of their vessels, that when we talk of a healthy slave-ship, we talk of a nonentity; there is no such thing. And no certain proportion can be found between the comparative healthiness of one voyage and another; but making the best comparison we can, and taking into the account the numbers that die in the windward trade before they quit the coast, the result would be in favour of the Leeward.

My lords, with respect to the reduction that has taken place in the export from the Windward Coast, the witnesses pro-

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nounce that the war is the cause of it; and they say, that some time or other, though in what future year of our Lord they cannot tell, a peace will come: and when the peace comes, the trade upon the Windward Coast, if this bill should not pass into a law, will revive. My lords, I say, that at best this is but prophecy; and we have had abundant experience, that when these gentlemen pretend to prophecy, their predictions are generally falsified by the event: but I say, that without any revival of the trade upon the windward, which I hope and trust will never be, we have the highest reason to believe that the deficit apprehended from the prohibitions of this bill will be more than made up by the growth of the trade on the remaining part of the coast. Now, my lords, since the diminution of the trade upon the whole, by the operation of this bill, will be nothing,—since neither the interests of the slave-trade itself, nor the supply of the West India islands, nor the trade of Liverpool, can possibly be affected by this diminution, — since the inconveniences apprehended from the proposed limitation by reason of the necessity of touching at the windward coast for provisions—since the greater length of the Middle Passage from the leeward coast—the greater unhealthiness of the voyage—since all this is mere pretence, falsehood, fiction, and delusion—I ask your lordships, whether the objects of the Sierra Leone company are not such as in some degree merit your attention? The grand object of the Sierra Leone company is, to establish a fair and friendly commerce with the Africans: and, by that means, to spread the light of knowledge, divine and human, in that country, and gradually to forward its civilization. That these objects cannot be obtained while the slave trade is carried on in the neighbourhood of the colony, is manifest. By excluding the slave trade from that neighbourhood, the trade itself will suffer nothing; the benevolent designs of the Sierra Leone company will be forwarded. Much pains had been used, to make this colony contemptible; from the low state of their finances, the narrow extent of their trade, and the little progress they have hitherto made in their great project of instructing and civilizing Africa: but when I consider the difficulties the Sierra Leone colony has had to struggle with, my wonder is, not that it is not more flourishing, but that it exists at this moment—not that its progress is so small, but that it should be any thing. All infant colonies have difficulties; but the difficulties of this colony have been unusually great—the dreadful sickness which in the first year swept off so many of the first settlers; the destruction and pillage of their town by the French; but most of all the untoward materials they had to work upon, in the formation of the colony itself. The first colonists were the blacks from Nova Scotia: these were a set of people of the very worst dispositions—averse to labour, debauched, refractory, untractable, my lords, it is no small argument of the good effects that may be expected from this colony, that these are now, by the good management of the company, quite an altered race—sober, industrious, orderly. But, we have still a stronger argument of what this colony may do, in the change for the better which in some small degree has taken place in the manners of the slave traders in their neighbourhood. My lords, it is easy to understand, that your slave-trader must be an animal more difficult to tame than the mere savage: the slave-trader is something very different from the savage man: he is the man barbarized—not untaught, like the savage but, acquainted with civil life, and with powers of intellect considerably improved, he uses his improved intellect only to be the slave of his avarice, and to overpower all those generous sympathies of our nature which might be obstacles to its pursuits: he has eradicated in his own bosom all the virtuous feelings of the savage; he has imbibed all that is evil in the policy of civil life. Yet the Sierra Leone company has succeeded in somewhat softening the loathsome asperity of the manners of these barbarians.

But, my lords, there remains one principal argument brought against the bill, of which I have not yet taken notice. However inconsiderable the number of the slaves may be of which it will deprive the trade, it is said the bill will deprive it of its best slaves: and in this respect, the loss, however it may be made up in point of number, in value cannot be compensated by the supply from other parts; for, with the exception of some taken from the Gold Coast, the slaves procured upon the Windward Coast, the witnesses say, are the very best of all. And why are they the best, my lords?—They are the best, not only because they are the healthiest and the strongest, but because they are the fittest for field labour; they are the

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most tractable, docile, and submissive: they are easily trained to many parts of the business of a ship; they easily learn the use of small arms, and to work the great guns with so much dexterity, that two of the slave-captains have told your lordships they have fought their ships with cargoes of these slaves. One of the two, in 1796, commander of the Jemmy of Liverpool, with only eight white men aboard, but with 219 slaves from Cape Mount, engaged a French privateer, and beat her off. The other, in 1779, his ship's company being 42 whites, with 150 Windward Coast slaves in arms chased a large French privateer into Aux Cayes in St. Domingo; when another ship of the enemy, of equal force, lay a few miles to leeward. My lords, while these Africans were upon military duty, they were permitted to assume the appearance of men and of soldiers; they were armed and dressed like the other men: What became of them when the service was performed? My lords, they were divested of the arms which they had so bravely used in the defence of the ships of this country against the king's enemies; they were divested of their clothing! they were stripped stark naked, my lords,—these men who had saved our vessels, from the enemy! they were exposed to sale, naked slaves, in the slave markets of the West Indies! My lords, what were your feelings when this shameful tale was told? I will tell your lordships what my feelings were—what they are at this moment: I would rather have been one of the Africans which were so sold, than either of the British slave captains (I lament, my lords, that I must call them Britons) who sold their valiant comrades in arms!

But, my lords, the circumstance to which I would principally direct your attention is this,—this fitness for field-labour, this tractability, this docility of disposition, these, wherever they are found, are certain marks of at least incipient civilization; and the Windward Coast slaves, in whom these marks of incipient civilization, by the testimony of these witnesses, appear, are for that reason the very persons whom the slave-trade, upon its own principles, ought to spare. My lords, when the slave-trade attempts to defend itself, as it does, upon the ground of humanity, it is upon this pretence,—that the natives of Africa are in that state of barbarism from which it is impossible they should ever spontaneously emerge: they pretend, therefore, that it is charity to these people to tear them from their native soil, and transport them to those Hesperides of the blacks, where their condition, though bad enough, will yet be something better in some small degree nearer to that of civil life, than it ever could be if they remained in their own country. My lords, if the assumption were true, I know not that the conclusion would be just. A learned counsel at the bar took upon him to argue the policy of public measures; he took upon him to instruct your lordships in your legislative duty; he admonished you to beware how you would attempt to alter by force the moral and political state of man. My lords, I agree with the learned counsel in the general maxim;—the moral and political state of man is ordered by Providence; and any attempt of man forcibly to alter and amend it is a presumptuous interference in a matter that belongs to Providence: but, my lords, upon the slave-trade I charge the guilt of that presumption. If the natives of Africa are in that abject state of barbarism which the slave-merchants allege, I say that Providence has placed them in it; and what has the slave-trade to do with His dispensations? Whatever the present condition of these Africans may be, I am confident that the merciful God who has cast their present lot so low, will, in his own good time, without the interference of the slave trade, raise them to the full state and dignity of man. Let the slave-trade leave the work to Him: it is no concern of theirs. But if the plea that they set up were better than it is as applied to Africa in general, their argument fails them on the Windward Coast: the slaves procured there are not in the state of hopeless barbarism they describe; by their own showing, among these people the work of civilivation is begun. And think, my lords, how far, over what a length of country, this incipient civilization must extend. The slaves procured upon this Windward Coast are not the natives of the coast itself; they are brought down from remote parts of the interior country. The witnesses have told your lordships, that these people reckon their time by moons; and describe the time that they are travelling to the coast as five, six, seven, and sometimes eight moons; and the witnesses guess that their rate of travelling may be 15 miles per day. I will take six moons as

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the time of the journey; and I will suppose they travel only twelve miles per day: Twelve miles per day, for six months together, makes a journey of 2,124 British miles; and so many British miles, upon the parallel of the middle latitude of the Windward Coast, make 31½ degrees longitude; and 31 degrees of longitude eastward from the middle of the Windward Coast carry us into the very heart of Africa, in the broadest part. And throughout this long tract of country, the natives, by the evidence of the witnesses themselves, bear the marks of incipient civilization. But, by the relation of Mr. Park, on which I rely more than on the united testimony of all these witnesses, through the whole extent of this country, civilization is much more than incipient. Through this very country the line of Mr. Park's journey lay; and, my lords, you cannot travel half a day with Mr. Park, in the whole route from Pisania to the very extremity of that line, but you find all the way the pleasing vestiges of a civilization that has already made some progress, and is heightening every step you go the farther you get inland from the coast,—that is, the farther you recede from the stage on which the slave trade perpetrates its horrors. Mr. Park not only speaks in general terms of the growing civilization of these people, but he mentions many particulars, from which your lordships may form your own judgment. He thus describes the dress of the Mandingoes: "Both sexes dress in cotton cloth of their own manufacture: the men wear a loose frock with drawers half-way down the leg, sandals on their feet, white cotton caps on their heads; the women, a petticoat of the same material, with a sort of mantle cast over their shoulders." My lords, is this the dress of savages?—Is there not evidently a degree of elegance and neatness in it? Speaking of their manners, he says "They are industrious in agriculture and pasturage: they manufacture cotton cloths, and coloured leathers! they smelt iron; they smelt gold; they draw gold wire, of which they form various ornaments." Are these the occupations of barbarians? My lords, they are not destitute of moral principle: the first lesson, says Mr. Park, a Mandingo woman teaches her child, is the practice of truth: the lamentation of a miserable mother over her son, murdered by a moorish banditti, was, that in the course of his blameless life, "her boy had never told a lie, no never!" Towards strangers, he says they are of a mild and obliging disposition. Having mentioned their habit of pilfering, he adds—"To counterbalance this depravity in their nation, it is impossible for me to forget the disinterested charity and tender solicitude with which these poor heathens sympathized with me in my sufferings, relieved my distresses, and contributed to my safety. In so free and kind a manner (speaking of the women in particular)" [A laugh]———My lords, there is nothing in this to provoke the laugh of levity: Mr. Park's is a simple, but a serious, sober narrative; the freedom of which he speaks was not the freedom of wantonness, as those who laugh must be supposed to understand it——— "In so free and kind a manner did they (the women) contribute to my relief, that if I was dry, I drank the sweetest draught, if hungry, I ate the coarsest morsel, with a double relish." Then, of their domestic attachments and affections among themselves, he gives many striking instances. Your lordships, I am sure, must recollect the affecting story of the return of the blacksmith of Kasson, to his native village.—By the way, my lords, I must ask, is this a character of savage manners,—that a young man goes from his home to a distant country, to find profitable employment in a trade?—But the story of the return, my lords, after an absence of some years! His brother meets him on the road, and brings out a singing man to sing him into the village; he brings a horse to mount him upon, that he may enter the town in a respectable manner: at the entrance of the village, his arrival is welcomed by a concourse of the people; his mother blind with age, supporting her tottering steps upon her staff, is led out to meet him; the crowds respectfully make way for her; she shows the strongest emotions of joy and maternal affection, when she is satisfied, by feeling his person with her hands, that he is indeed her very son. Mr. Park concludes the interesting narrative with this remark, that "from this interview he was fully convinced, that whatever difference there is between the negro and European in the formation of the nose, and the colour of the skin, there is none in the genuine sympathies and characteristic feeling of our common nature." These, my lords, are the people which the slave-trade, in defiance of its own principles, makes its

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victims on the Windward Coast,—because, forsooth, they are the best of slaves! Their civilization is already in its progress, and needs not the assistance of the slave-trade.

My lords, shall I be told, "Imagine what civility you please, slavery is the birth-right of the African; and we remove him only from slavery in one place to slavery in another?" My lords, slavery is a word of very large indefinite meaning, comprehending a variety of conditions, in fact very different from one another under a common name. I admit that it is the case, that in that part of Africa of which I have been speaking, not more than one-fourth part of the inhabitants are of free condition; the other three-fourths are slaves. But, of what sort is the African slavery in Africa?—My lords, it seems at this moment perfectly analogous to the slavery of the heroic and the patriarchal ages; when the slave and the freeborn lived so much upon a footing that you could hardly distinguish the one from the other,—when the princess Nausicaa took a part in the labour of her female slaves—and the slave-girls, when the common task was finished, were the playmates of the princess,—when Abraham's confidential slave, sent to choose a wife for his master's eldest son, found the lady designed by Providence to be joined in marriage to so great a man as Isaac, in the laborious office of drawing water for her father's cattle—and the slave of Abraham that came upon this happy errand was received by the parents of the bride with all the respect and hospitality with which they could have received his master. My lords, the indigenous slavery of Africa is of this kind. The witnesses have told you, that persons not well acquainted with the country would mistake the domestic slaves for free persons: there is no external distinction; they are dressed alike, they are fed alike; they are lodged alike; and they are all employed alike; the slave is not treated with rigour, nor punished with severity; the master cannot legally sell his domestic slave, unless for crime, and with the consent and approbation of the family. My lords, it is absurd to compare this sort of slavery with that to which, the slave trade consigns the African; no two things can be more unlike; they agree in nothing but the name. My lords, the learned counsel who replied to the summing up of the learned counsel for the Sierra Leone company, said, that if the slave trade were the wicked sinful thing which those who would abolish it conceive it to be, it is very strange there should be no prohibition, no reprobation of slavery, in the Holy Scriptures either of the Old or New Testament. The learned counsel evidently wished your lordships to conclude, that the slave trade is at least not condemned, if not sanctioned, by religion. My lords, that learned counsel has studied his law books with more critical accuracy than his Bible, or he never would have been the great and able lawyer that he is; he would have been no better lawyer than he is divine,—that is to say, he would have been a very bad one. My lords, the sentiments of a right reverend prelate, while he lived a dear and valued friend of mine,* have been cited in this night's debate, as if they had in some degree coincided with those of the learned counsel upon the subject. True it is, that about the time when the question of abolition first began to be agitated, the right reverend prelate let fall something in a sermon, about a danger which he apprehended might arise from exciting the public mind upon the subject of the slave trade, while it was protected by the laws, and while the matter was under the examination of the privy council. I confess that I never saw that danger; and I am confident, were the right reverend prelate among us now, his sentiments upon the scriptural part of the argument would not be very different from mine. Be that as it may, I am confident, that in what I am about to deliver upon that subject, I shall have the concurrence of my right reverend brethren near me. My lords, I do certainly admit, that there is no prohibition of slavery in the Bible, in explicit terms,—such as these would be, "Thou shalt not have a slave," or "Thou shalt not hold any one in slavery;" there is no explicit reprobation of slavery by name. If I were to say that there was no occasion for any such prohibition or reprobation because slavery is condemned by something anterior either to the christian or the Mosaic dispensation, I could support the assertion by grave authorities,—not the authorities of the new-fashioned advocates of the rights of men,—not such authorities as Vattel or Tom Paine. My lords, what is the definition of slavery in

* Dr. Samuel Halifax, Lord Bishop of Gloucester, afterwards of St. Asaph.

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the imperial institutes?—"Servitus est constitutio juris gentium, qua quis dominio alieno contra naturam subjicitur." And they are called slaves, servi, because commanders were accustomed to sell prisoners of war, and to save, *servare*, those who otherwise would have been slain. And what is the comment of Vinius upon these paragraphs?—That among Christians this institution of the law of nations is not in use, because "The law of charity has taught Christians, that captives are not to become the slaves of the captors; that they ought not to be sold,—ought not to be compelled to hard labour, nor to submit to many other thing in the servile condition" But, my lords, in truth it would be very extraordinary if the Bible contained any such prohibition or reprobation of slavery, in terms, as the learned counsel seems to have searched for in it, and has searched for in vain. The Christian religion is an institution not adapted to any particular nation, to any one age, or to any particular form of government; it is universal, for all nations, for all ages, for all forms of government without exception: it therefore enjoins nothing and prohibits nothing but what is universally practicable or universally omissible. Now, my lords, slavery, though certainly contrary to the nature of man in its perfection, yet is one of those things, which, in the present depraved state of human nature, will in point of fact,—slavery, though not in its worst forms, but in some form or another, will in fact always exist among the sons of men; it will perhaps always be a part, though a bad part, of the actual condition of the human race. Now, my lords, the Christian religion, and revealed religion generally, is very cautious how it disturbs the peace of the world by sudden and violent emendations of the political and moral state of man: it gives out general principles, which will work an amendment by degrees; and trusts for the eradication of moral evil, to the slow and silent operation of those general principles. But if you will conclude, that whatever is not expressly prohibited or reprobated in the Holy Scriptures is sanctioned by them, the inference will be extravagant and dangerous. The sacred history records, without any expression of disapprobation, the severities exercised by king David upon the vanquished Ammonites, when he put them under axes, and saws of iron, and harrows of iron, and made them pass through the brickkilns: would your lordships allow it to be a just inference, that religion sanctions generally such treatment of conquered enemies? Because the Christian religion positively enjoins the submission of the individual to the existing government, be it what it may,—or in what hands it may—would your lordships infer, that the Christian religion gives its sanction to the injustice and oppressions of Nero and Caligula? Yet to all this the argument goes, if from the non-condemnation of any thing in holy writ, we are to conclude the approbation of it, and by consequence the innocency of the practice.

But, my lords, in truth I may wave all this: I might concede, if the thing were true, without prejudice to the cause of abolition, that religion even approves the condition of slavery. The question of abolition has nothing to do with the question whether the condition of slavery be allowed or forbidden by religion—whether it be consistent with natural justice or contrary to it: Upon the question of abolition, those who take contrary sides are not at issue about the right or wrong of the condition of slavery; but we are at issue about the right or the wrong of certain modes or means that are used of reducing men to that condition: are the means which the slave trade employs for that purpose right or wrong?—Now, my lords, I do affirm, that, although the learned counsel knew not where to find it, the New Testament contains an express reprobation in terms, an express prohibition of the slave trade by name, as sinful in a very high degree. The apostle St. Paul in the First of his Epistles to St. Timothy [A Laugh!]. My lords, the Bible is to be treated in this House with reverence. If I find occasion, in argument upon a subject like the present, to quote particular texts, any noble lord who may think proper to receive such quotations with a laugh must expect that I call him to order.—I was saying, my lords, that St. Paul, in the First of his Epistles to St. Timothy, having spoken of persons that were "lawless and disobedient, ungodly and sinners, unholy and profane," proceeds to specify and distinguish the several characters and descriptions of men to which he applies those very general epithets; and they are these,—"murderers of fathers, murderers of mothers, man-slayers,

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they that defile themselves with mankind, men stealers." Man-stealing, your lordships see, is placed by the apostle in the scale of crime next after parricide, homicide, and sodomy. Now what is man-stealing? Is it not kidnapping and panyaring? Your lordships then cannot doubt that this text condemns and prohibits the slave-trade, in one at least of its most productive modes. But I go farther: I maintain that this text, rightly interpreted, condemns and prohibits the slave-trade generally, in all its modes; it ranks the slave trade, in the descending scale of crime, next after parricide, homicide, and sodomy. The original word for which the English Bible gives "men-stealers," is ἀνδραποδιστὴς. Our translators have taken the word in the restricted sense which it bears in the attic law; in which the δίκη ἀνδραποδισμοῦ was a criminal prosecution for the specific crime of kidnapping, the penalty of which was death. But your lordships know, that the phraseology of the Holy Scriptures, especially in the preceptive part, is a popular phraseology; and my learned friend opposite to me (lord Thurlow) very well knows, that ἀνδραποδιστὴς, in its popular sense, is a person who "deals in men," literally a slave trader: that is the English word, literally and exactly corresponding to the Greek.* That learned lord knows very well, that the Greek word is so explained by the learned grammarian Eustathius, and by other grammarians of the first authority.† I repeat it therefore, once more, that in this text of scripture the slave trade is condemned and prohibited by name, as a thing abominable in the sight of God, and wicked in the next degree to sodomy.

My lords, the learned counsel with whose argument I have been dealing closed his eloquent oration with an admonition to your lordships to beware how you are persuaded to adopt the visionary projects of fanaticism. My lords, I know not in what direction that shaft was shot; and I care not: It concerns not me; proudly conscious as I am, that with the highest reverence for our holy religion—with the firmest conviction of its truth—with a deep sense, I trust, of the importance of its doctrines and its precepts—the general shape and fashion of my life bears nothing of the stamp of fanaticism. But, my lords, give me leave, in my turn, to address a word of serious exhortation to your lordships. Beware, my lords, how you are persuaded to bury under the opprobrious name of fanaticism the regard which you owe to the great duties of justice and mercy; for the neglect of which, if you should neglect them, you will be answerable at that tribunal where no prevarication of witnesses can misinform the judge,—where no subtilty of an advocate, miscalling the names of things, "putting evil for good and good for evil, bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter," can mislead his judgment.

Lord *Thurlow* acknowledged himself unequal, nor did he think it necessary, to follow the right reverend prelate through the labyrinth of his learned disquisition. It would indeed be vain, for perhaps there was no text of scripture to which some learned gownsman might not, by recurring to Greek and Hebrew etymologies, give some other meaning than that in which it appeared to a plain man like himself. As little could he perceive the justness of that reasoning, by which he went to prove the morality of the Africans by the women wearing petticoats. He could not see that in the best system of morality and the purest system of religion which had ever appeared, the Christian religion, there was any prohibition against slavery like that which had been argued by the reverend prelate. With respect to the purest bill, he did not think it at all calculated for the purposes which it professed to have in view. It was drawn up in a most clumsy manner, giving as the necessity for adopting it, "whereas a factory has been erected on the Coast of Africa." Now, there were several factories on the Coast of Africa; but probably it meant the Sierra Leone company. He knew that in 1791, a

* "Who will there be to sell you slaves," says Poverty to Chremulus, in the "Plutus," Act Second, Scene Fifth, "when the other will have money in plenty as well as you?"—"Some merchant," replies Chremulus, "desirous of gain, coming from Thessaly, παρὰ πλείστων ἀνδραποδιστῶν, where slave-traders are most numerous."—See the Scholiast on the passage. Much has been said in defence of the slave trade from the example of antiquity. The fact however is, that the persons who carried it on were universally infamous; for ἀνδραποδιστὴς, "a slave trader," in the Greek language was an appellation of the highest infamy and reproach: you could not call a man a worse name.—Vide Schol. Aristoph. Thesmop. lin. 825.

† Eustath. ad Il. H. 475. Schol. Aristoph. ad. Plut. lin. 521.

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charter had been granted for erecting this company into a corporation for the purpose of trade. In the charter a clause was inserted to prohibit them as a company from trading in slaves upon that part of the Coast; but no penalty was annexed to a breach of the prohibition, nor was it provided that their agents should be so prohibited. What other trade could they carry on? It was a miserable company, which never could flourish in a place which experience had proved to be incapable of yielding any productions of value. The bill was altogether miserable and ridiculous. But the society alleged that it would civilize the Africans; that was to say they would send missionaries to preach in a barn of Sierra Leone to a set of negroes, who did not understand a single word of his language. He considered the bill to be absurd, unjust, and such as ought not to be passed into a law.

The House divided: Contents, 25; Not-contents, 32; Proxies, 36, on each side. The bill was consequently thrown out.

Protest against the Militia Reduction Bill.] July 10. The following Protest was entered on the Journals:

"Dissentient,

"Because the measures prescribed by the bill are destructive of the constitutional force of the country, by making the militia ballot a fund for the supply, and its discipline a drill for the accommodation, of other corps, and by degrading its officers to the humiliating situation of commanding the miserable remnants of their regiments rejected by recruiting serjeants of the line.

"Because the subversion of this constitutional force must be the inevitable consequence, as it is probably the object of these measures; for it cannot be imagined that gentlemen of property (such as are required by the still remaining wreck of the militia laws) should hereafter come forward in times of difficulty and danger, with a zeal and patriotism so much applauded, and so bitterly insulted: that men of the highest consideration and fortune, such as alone can form a constitutional force, should quit their domestic comforts and family occupations, without personal views or professional allurements, to fill a station so degrading to them as that of drill-serjeants for the army; but exclusive of this great and insuperable objection, we consider this bill as framed under circumstances of gross inattention to the public interest, to private rights of various descriptions, and to the clearest and most important principles of the constitution; and we should esteem ourselves neglectful of our own characters, as well as deficient in public duty, if we did not record our marked and unreserved reprobation of a measure of such dangerous tendency.

"1. Because the promoters of this bill have, contrary to every principle of common justice, established an arbitrary proportion, by which the respective counties are hereafter to be burthened with the expense of raising their future militia, deviating from the established scale, approved and sanctioned by the acts of the twenty-sixth and thirty-seventh of the king, without any grounds laid before parliament by which the justice of such deviation could be estimated; though in a few days, and with no expense, the annual list for the county ballots returned to the lieutenants of each county, and directed (by the 26th of Geo. 3rd, chap. 107, clause 50) to be transmitted to the secretary of state, would without error have produced a correct scale.

"2. Because all militia men, not arriving (after the enrolment) at their respective regiments at the exact time contained in any order which may be given to them, are declared to be deserters, liable to be taken from service in the militia for five years within the kingdom, and condemned to serve in regiments of the line for life in any part of the world, by sentence of a regimental court martial, where neither the judges nor the witnesses are upon oath; and by an additional injustice, the county which paid the service of the man is liable to the farther charge of supplying his place.

"3. Because the difficulties and embarrassments which men enrolled to serve in the militia are exposed to by this bill are so obviously cruel and unjust, that it affords no slight ground of suspicion that they are intended to promote the recruiting the regular forces from the militia by the forced desertions of the unfortunate individuals who shall be engaged in the militia service; for the man, as soon as he is enrolled, perhaps many hundred miles from his regiment, is ordered to join it, but by this bill no pay is to commence, nor allowance to be granted till he actually arrives at his regiment; he is deprived of all former sources of subsistence, and

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is not entitled to the means of present support; plunder or charity alone can maintain him on the road; and if under all these insurmountable difficulties he does not arrive within the time limited in his orders, he is liable to be treated as a deserter.

"4. Because by this bill the regiments of militia are invited to a state of disorder and mutiny by anticipation, as the bill has publicly declared that desertion before the period of its passing into a law was to be made an offence not necessarily followed by punishment, but that every man may by such desertion take leave of absence till August, if by that time he shall enlist into the regular service; the bill encourages immediate desertion from a service to which the men had sworn fidelity, and the king is empowered to authorise the deserter's entrance into another service, discharged from any claim by the militia regiment to which he belongs.

"5. Because by this bill the most important and incontrovertible principle of the constitution is flagrantly impeached. Whether it is legal or not, to appropriate public money by an order of the commissioners of the Treasury, and levy money on the land owners by a similar order, without consent of parliament, is stated by this bill as a matter of doubt entertained by parliament; and on the grounds of this pretended doubt, a clause of indemnity is introduced, of which the title of the bill gave no intimation, and to which the attention of the legislature had not been directed.

In this general neglect, overthrow, and denial of private justice, public principles, and national rights, it is not to be wondered at, that little attention should be paid to the feelings of individuals, however called by their country to stations of considerable confidence and trust; yet we cannot but express our disapprobation of the grating directions to commanding officers of militia regiments, to crimp for another service their associates and fellow soldiers, and become at once the instrument both of their own disgrace, and of that of the militia establishments, to which they are zealously attached.

(Signed) CAERNARVON,
RADNOR,
WENTWORTH FITZWILLIAM."

Mr. Tierney's Finance Resolutions.] June 28. Mr. Tierney rose and said:—Sir, in pursuance of the notice which I gave, I now rise to trouble the House with several resolutions relative to the finances of the country. It is now three years since any question of the expenditure of the country was agitated; it is now three years since any inquiry was instituted into the magnitude of that expenditure, the application of it, or the consequences to which it must lead. My object in these resolutions is, to take a comparative view of what the state of the country was at the period previous to the war, and what it is now; to show at what rate of expense we are travelling, and what the result must be, even if peace should arrive at the end of the present year.—Mr. Tierney here read his Resolutions, which were as follow:

FINANCE RESOLUTIONS.

1. That it appears to this House, that the amount of the public funded debt existing on the 5th January, 1793, was 238,231,248*l.* exclusive of the long and short annuities to the amount of 1,373,550*l.*; of which sums on the 1st of February, 1799, stock to the amount of 28,677,689*l.* had been purchased by, and annuities to the amount of 119,880*l.* had fallen in to the commissioners for redeeming the national debt; reducing the actual amount of the debt existing on the 5th of January, 1793, to 209,553,559*l.* and the annuities to 1,253,670*l.*

2. That the amount of the public funded debt, created since the 5th January, 1793 (including the amount to be created by sums borrowed in the present session of parliament, and exclusive of 7,502,633*l.* 3 per cent stock, and 230,000*l.* per annum annuities, created by advances to the emperor of Germany), is 225,602,792*l.* exclusive of long annuities to the amount of 283,206*l.* per annum; of which sums, on the 1st of Feb. 1799, 8,704,082*l.* had been purchased by the commissioners for redeeming the national debt; reducing the actual amount of debt created since the 5th Jan., 1793, to 216,898,710*l.* exclusive of long annuities to the amount of 283,206*l.* per annum.

3. That the total amount of the public funded debt, after deducting the sum of 37,381,771*l.* redeemed by, and the annuities fallen in to the commissioners, and exclusive of the imperial debt, is 426,452,269*l.*, together with short annuities to the amount of 549,051*l.* and long annuities to the amount of 987,946*l.*

4. That the sum applicable to the reduction of the national debt may, for the year 1799, be estimated at 4,500,000*l.*

5. That the permanent charge incurred by the national debt on the 5th Jan., 1793, was 9,325,866*l.* per annum.

6. That the permanent charge incurred by the debt created since the 5th Jan., 1793 (exclusive of interest payable by Ireland, and

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including 316,000*l.* permanent interest on the loan of the present session), amounts to 8,247,215*l.* per annum; and that a farther charge of 497,735*l.* per annum is liable to be incurred in default of payment of the interest of certain loans by his majesty the emperor of Germany.

7. That the unfunded debt (exclusive of anticipations in the usual form upon the land and malt taxes) amounted, on the 5th Jan., 1793, to 10,252,534*l.*

8. That the unfunded debt (exclusive of anticipations in the usual form upon the land and malt taxes) amounted, on the 5th Jan., 1799, to 17,405,974*l.*

9. That the nett produce of the old permanent taxes, existing previous to the war, was, on the 5th Jan., 1793, 14,284,000*l.*

10. That the nett produce of the old permanent taxes, existing previous to the war, was, on the 5th Jan., 1794, 13,941,000*l.*; on the 5th Jan., 1795, 13,858,000*l.*; on the 5th Jan. 1796, 13,557,000*l.*; on the 5th Jan., 1797, 14,292,000*l.*; on the 5th Jan., 1798, 13,332,000*l.*; on the 5th Jan., 1799, 14,275,000*l.*; and on the 5th April, 1799, 14,574,300*l.*

11. That the nett produce of the taxes imposed since the 5th Jan., amounted, in the year ending the 5th April, 1799, to 7,272,048*l.*

12. That the total value of all imports into Great Britain, in the year ending the 5th Jan., 1793, was 19,659,358*l.*; and on an average of six years, ending 5th Jan., 1793, 18,685,290*l.*

That the total value of all imports into Great Britain, in the year ending 5th Jan., 1779, was 25,654,000*l.*; and on an average of six years, ending 5th Jan., 1799, 21,356,396*l.*

13. That the total value of British manufactures exported from Great Britain, in the year ending 5th Jan., 1793, was 18,336,851*l.*, and on an average of six years, ending 5th Jan., 1793, 14,771,049*l.*

That the total value of British manufactures exported, in the year ending the 5th Jan., 1799, was 19,771,510*l.*; and on an average of six years, ending 5th Jan., 1799, 17,154,823*l.*

14. That the total value of foreign merchandize exported from Great Britain, in the year ending the 5th Jan. 1793, was 6,497,911*l.*; and on an average of six years, ending 5th Jan., 1793, 5,468,014*l.*

That the total value of foreign merchandize exported from Great Britain, in the year ending the 5th Jan., 1799, was 13,883,385*l.*; and on an average of six years, ending the 5th Jan., 1799, 10,753,688*l.*

15. That the total sum to be raised in Great Britain, in the year 1799, may be estimated as follows, viz.

Interest of the public funded debt, charges of management and sinking fund, on the 5th Jan., 1799, after deducting the interest payable by Ireland	£.18,760,024
Interest payable for the Imperial loan	497,735
Interest, &c. to be incurred and payed between the 5th Jan., 1799, and the 5th Jan., 1800, on stock created by loans in the present session, to the amount of 15,500,000*l.*	566,350
Interest on exchequer bills, estimated to be the same as paid in the year ending the 5th Jan., 1799	356,847
The civil list	898,000
Other charges on the consolidated fund, estimated to be the same as incurred in the year ending the 5th Jan., 1799, and adding 26,000*l.* annuities granted in the present session of parliament	239,075
Civil government in Scotland, estimated as before	111,973
Pensions upon the hereditary revenues, ditto	55,400
Militia and deserters warrants, ditto	77,635
Bounties for promoting fisheries linen manufactures, &c, estimated as before	344,076
Charges of management of the revenue, ditto	1,589,437
Supplies voted for 1799, exclusive of one million to defray vote of credit, 1798	29,947,000
Advance to Ireland	3,000,000
Vote of credit for probable contingencies	3,000,000
	£.59,443,552

16. That it appears to this House, that the gross receipt of the revenue (after deducting re-payments for over-entries, drawbacks, and bounties in the nature of drawbacks), amounted, in the year ending the 5th Jan., 1799, to 26,039,046*l.*

That the tax on income is estimated to produce a sum of 7,500,000*l.* per annum.

That the tax on imports and exports may be estimated to produce a sum of 1,500,000*l.*

That permanent taxes have been imposed in the present session of parliament, calculated to produce 316,000*l.*; and that, estimating the gross receipt of the revenue to continue the same as in the year ending the 5th Jan., 1799, the total amount to be raised by taxes, for the service of the year 1799, may be computed at a sum not less than 35,355,046*l.*

17. That it appears by the report of a committee of this House in 1791, that the actual expenditure of the peace establishment, (including the annual million for the sinking fund), on an average of five years, ending the 5th Jan, 1791, was £.16,816,965

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That the additional permanent charge incurred by the debt created since 1793, exclusive of interest payable by Ireland, is	8,247,215
That the additional charge to be incurred for increased amount of exchequer bills outstanding, is	55,000
That the additional charge incurred for interest on navy debt, is	150,000
That the additional charge incurred on the consolidated fund, is	145,025
That the additional charge incurred for a sum annually voted for redemption of debt, is	200,000
And, that the future peace establishment (exclusive of any charges to be incurred by interest on sums to be paid on winding up the expenses of the war, exclusive of any increase of naval or military establishment, and exclusive of 497,000*l.* interest payable on imperial loans) cannot be estimated at less than	25,614,225

18. That the amount of 3 per cent stock to be redeemed, together with the annual interest thereon, by the tax on income, is 35,150,000*l.*

That the produce of the tax on income, as appears by an estimate before this House, may amount to 7,500,000*l.*

19. That during the continuance of the tax on income, the expenditure of the peace establishment cannot be estimated at less than 33,114,225*l.* per annum.

20. That supposing the war to end with the year 1799, the 3 per cents to remain on an average at 70, and the tax on income to produce 7,500,000*l.* per annum, the sum of 35,250,000*l.*, together with the interest payable thereon, would not be redeemed before the month of November, 1803.

21. That supposing the war to end with the year 1800, and the same sum to be borrowed on the credit of the tax upon income for the service of that year which has been raised for the service of the present year, viz. eleven millions, and to be funded in 3 per cents at 60, the total amount of stock to be redeemed would be 53,583,000*l.* together with the interest payable thereon; and estimating the produce of the tax on income to be 7,500,000*l.* per annum, and calculating the 3 per cents, to remain on an average at 70, such redemption would not be completed before the month of November, 1806. The probable annual expenditure during the first five years and a half of peace would therefore be upwards of thirty-three millions, exclusive of any charges to be incurred for sums to be paid on winding up the expenses of the war; exclusive of any increase in the naval or military establishment beyond those of the last peace, and exclusive of the interest payable on the imperial loans."

At the suggestion of Mr. Pitt, the Resolutions were ordered to be printed, and the debate thereon was adjourned to the 1st of July.

July 1. On the order of the day for resuming the adjourned debate on the said Resolutions, Mr. Pitt said, that it was his intention to propose several amendments to the resolutions moved by the hon. gentleman, and to state, in the shape of resolutions, several additional facts in order to enable the House to judge fully of the financial state of the country. He would therefore move, that the farther discussion be postponed till Wednesday.

July 3. The House having, on the suggestion of Mr. Pitt, resolved itself into a Committee of the whole House, to consider of the Income, Expenditure, and Commerce of the country, and of the progress which has been made, and may be expected to be made, in the reduction of the National Debt, and the preventing the accumulation thereof in future, Mr. Pitt rose and entered into an able examination of the several resolutions proposed by Mr. Tierney, and concluded with moving certain counter resolutions, which, after a short debate, were agreed to by the committee and ordered to be reported to the House on the 11th instant.

Report on the Public Income and Expenditure.] July 11. The Resolutions moved by Mr. Tierney being read, Mr. Pitt moved the previous question upon each, which was carried. After which, the Resolutions moved by Mr. Pitt were reported to the House, and are as follow:

Resolved, 1. That it is the opinion of this committee, that the amount of the public funded debt was on the 5th of January 1786, 238,231,248*l.*; exclusive of long and short annuities and annuities for lives to the amount of 1,373,550*l.*:—that on the 1st of Feb. 1793, stock to the amount of 10,242,100*l.* had been purchased by the commissioners for redeeming the national debt; and annuities to the amount of 79,880*l.* had fallen in, and had been carried to their account; reducing the actual amount of the debt on the 5th Jan. 1793, to 227,989,148*l.* and the annuities to 1,293,670*l.*: and that on the 1st Feb. 1799 stock to the amount of 28,677,689*l.*, had been purchased by the commissioners for redeeming the national debt; and annuities to the amount of 119,880*l.* had fallen in, and been carried to their account; reducing the actual amount of debt existing before the war, on

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the 1st Feb. 1799, to 209,553,559*l.*, and the annuities to 1,253,670*l.*

2. That the amount of the public funded debt, created since the 1st Feb. 1793 (including the amount to be created by sums borrowed in the present session of parliament, and exclusive of 7,502,633*l.* 3 per cent stock, and 250,000*l.* per annum annuities created by advances to the emperor of Germany) was 225,602,792*l.* exclusive of long annuities to the amount of 283,206*l.* per annum; of which 12,175,000*l.* is on account of Ireland, and 35,250,000*l.* is provided for by the tax on income, leaving a permanent debt of 178,177,000*l* charged on Great Britain. And that on the 1st Feb. 1799, 8,704,082*l.* had been purchased by the commissioners for redeeming the national debt, reducing the said permanent debt, created since the 5th Jan. 1793, to 169,473,000*l.* exclusive of long annuities to the amount of 283,206*l.* per annum, after deducting the annuities payable by Ireland.

3. That the total amount of the permanent funded debt charged on Great Britain (after deducting the sum of 37,381,771*l.* redeemed by and the annuities fallen in to the commissioners) was, on the 1st Feb. 1799, 386,902,000*l.* together with the short annuities to the amount of 549,130*l.* and long annuities to the amount of 987,947*l.* after deducting the annuities provided for by Ireland:

4. That the sum annually applicable to the reduction of the national debt, in pursuance of the act passed in 1786, was 1,000,000*l.* being about 1-238th part of the capital of the permanent debt then existing; and for 1793 was 1,427,143*l.* being about 1-160th part of the permanent debt existing in 1793; and may, for the year 1799, be estimated at 4,500,000*l.* being about 1-86th part of the permanent debt existing in 1799.

5. That the annual charge incurred on account of the permanent debt, on the 5th Jan. 1786, was 9,297,000*l.* before any fund was created applicable to the reduction of the debt; and on the 5th Jan. 1793, was 10,325,000*l.* including 1,000,000*l.* applicable to the reduction of the debt.

6. That the annual charge incurred on account of the permanent debt, created since the 5th Jan. 1793 (including 316,000*l.* permanent interest on loan of the present session) amounts to 8,246,215*l.* per annum; of which 6,426,755*l.* is for interest, annuity, and charges of management, and 1,819,460*l.* applicable to the reduction of debt; and that a farther charge of 497,735*l.* per annum, is guaranteed by parliament in default of payment of the interest of certain loans by his majesty the emperor of Germany.

7. That the outstanding demands on the 5th Jan. 1793, amounted to 1,327,112*l.* and on the 5th Jan. 1799, to 3,367,541*l.*; the whole of which have been provided for, part thereof in the former session of parliament, and the remainder in the present session.

8. That the unfunded debt (exclusive of the anticipation in the usual form upon the land and malt tax) on the 5th Jan. 1793, amounted to 8,925,422*l.* and on the 5th Jan. 1799, to 14,137,686*l.*; of which 1,981,653*l.* was provided for in the present session of parliament, leaving an unfunded debt of 12,176,083*l.* which increase of 3,250,611*l.* beyond the amount of the unfunded debt on the 5th Jan. 1793, is occasioned chiefly from an addition of 1,000,000*l.* exchequer bills, and of an additional navy debt, arising from increased demands during the war, and bearing no interest.

9. That the nett produce of the permanent taxes, existing on the 5th Jan. 1784, then amounted to 10,194,259*l.* and that taxes were afterwards imposed, to defray the expenses of the war ending in 1783, amounting in 1786 to 938,000*l.*; making together 11,132,000*l.*

10. That the nett produce of the permanent taxes existing previous to the year 1784, adding thereto about 983,000*l.* imposed, as above stated, in 1784 and 1785, and 137,000*l.* arising from the consolidation act and duties imposed in 1789, was, on the 5th January 1793, 14,284,000*l.* On the 5th Jan. 1794, 13,941,000*l.* On the 5th Jan. 1795, 13,858,000*l.* On the 5th Jan. 1796, 13,557,000*l.* On the 5th of Jan. 1797, 14,292,000*l.* On the 5th Jan. 1798, 13,332,000*l.* On the 5th Jan. 1799, 14,275,000*l.* And, on the 5th April, 1799, 14,574,300*l.* Which last sum (after deducting the duties arising from the consolidation act, and those imposed in 1789) exceeds the nett produce of the permanent taxes on the 5th Jan. 1784, together with that of the taxes imposed in 1784, and 1785, by 3,305,000*l.*

11. That the actual nett produce of the taxes, imposed since the 5th Jan. 1793 amounted, in the year ending the 5th April, 1799, to 7,272,043*l.*; and that, on part of these taxes, the produce for one year has not yet been received, and no part of those imposed in the present year, estimated at 316,000*l.*

12. That the total value of all imports into Great Britain, in the year ending the 5th Jan. 1784, was 13,122,235*l.* and on an average of six years, ending 5th Jan. 1784, was 11,690,829*l.* That the total value of all imports into Great Britain, in the year ending the 5th Jan. 1793, was 19,659,358*l.* and on an average of six years ending the 5th Jan. 1793 was 18,685,390*l.* That the total value of all imports into great Britain, in the year ending the 5th Jan. 1799, was 25,654,000*l.* making an increase as compared with 1783, of 12,531,765*l.* and with 1792, of 5,994,642*l.*; and on an average of six years, ending the 5th Jan. 1799, was 22,356,296*l.*; making an increase, as compared with the average to Jan. 5th 1784, of 10,665,467*l.* and with the average to January 5th of 1793, of 3,670,906*l.*

13. That the total value of British manufactures, exported from Great Britain in the year ending 5th Jan. 1784, was 10,409,713*l.*

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and on an average of six years ending 5th Jan. 1784, was 8,616,660*l.* That the total value of British manufactures exported from Great Britain, in the year ending the 5th Jan. 1793, was 18,336,851*l.* and on an average of six years, ending the 5th Jan. 1793, 14,771,049*l.* That the total value of British manufactures exported from Great Britain in the year ending the 5th Jan. 1799, was 19,771,510*l.* making an increase as campared with 1783, of 9,361,797*l.* and with 1792 of 1,434,659*l.* and on average of six years, ending 5th Jan. 1799, was 17,154,323*l.*; making an increase as compared with the average to Jan. 5th, 1784, of 8,537,663*l.* and with the average to Jan. 5th, 1793, of 2,383,274*l.*

14. That the total amount of foreign merchandize exported from Great Britain in the year ending the 5th Jan. 1784, was 4,332,909*l* and on an average of six years, ending the 5th Jan. 1784, was 4,863,930*l.* That the total value of foreign merchandize exported from Great Britain, in the year ending the 5th Jan. 1793, was 6,568,000*l.* and on an average of six years, ending the 5th Jan. 1793, was 5,468,014*l.* That the total value of foreign merchandize, exported from Great Britain, in the year ending the 5th Jan. 1799, was 14,028,000*l.*; making an increase as compared with 1783, of 9,695,091*l.* and with 1792, of 7,460,000*l.*; and on an average of six years, ending 5th Jan. 1799, was 10,791,000*l.* making an increase as compared with the avearge to Jan. 5th, 1784, of 6,527,070*l.* and with the average to Jan. 5th 1793, of 5,322,986*l.*

15. That the total sum to be raised in Great Britain in the year 1799, may be estimated as follows, viz.

Interest of public funded debt, charges of management, and sinking fund on the 5th Jan. 1799, after deducting interest payable by Ireland 18,762,024

Interest, &c. to be incurred and paid betwen 5th Jan, 1799, and 5th Jan. 1800, on stock created by loans in the present session, to the amount of 15,500,000	510,000	
Interest on exchequer bills estimated to be the same as paid in the year to 5th Jan. 1799, including 204,812*l.* on land and malt	356,817	
The Civil List	898,000	
Other charges on consolidated fund, estimated to be the same as incurred in the year ending the 5th Jan. 1799 and adding 26,000*l.* for annuities granted in the present session of parliament	239,075	
Civil government of Scotland, estimated as before	111,973	
Pensions on hereditary revenue, ditto	55,400	
Militia and Deserters Warrants, ditto....	77,635	
Bounties for promoting Fisheries, Linen manufactures, &c. estimated as before	344,076	
Charges of management of the revenue estimated as before	1,589,437	
Making the total of permanent charges to be defrayed out of the gross receipt of permanent revenue		£.22,944,467
Supplies voted for 1799, exclusive of 1,000,000*l.* to defray Vote of Credit 1798	29,947,000	
Advance to Ireland..	3,000,000	
Vote of Credit for probable contingencies	3,000,000	
Interest payable for imperial Loans....	497,735	
Making together for the service of the year 1799		36,444,735
And making in the whole the sum of		59,389,202

16. That the gross receipt of the pernent revenue (after deducting repayments for over-entries, drawbacks and bounties in the nature of drawbacks) amounted in the year ending the 5th April, 1799, to.... 26,773,000

That the tax on Income is estimated to produce for the year 1799, a sum of 7,500,000

That the tax on imports and exports may be estimated to produce a sum of 1,500,000

That farther sums are applicable to the service of the year 1799 as follows:

7th Instalment on Aid 1798	650,000
Surplus of Consolidatdated fund in hand on the 5th April ..	521,000

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Repayments from Grenada, Imprests and Lottery	1,200,000	
And that the remainder of the supply for the year 1799, is provided for by a Loan on account of Great Britain of ..	15,500,000	
And a loan for Ireland of	3,000,000	
And by exchequer bills to be issued on the Vote of Credit	3,000,000	
		32,871,000
Making in the whole the sum of		£.59,644,000

17. That, estimating the gross receipt of the permanent revenue to continue the same as in the year ending the 5th April 1799, and adding thereto the permanent taxes imposed in this session of parliament, calculated to produce 316,000*l.* the total amount to be raised by permanent and temporary taxes for the service of the year 1799, may be computed at the sum of 36,089,000*l.*

18. That it appears by a report of a committee of this House, in 1791, that the actual expenditure (including the annual million for the reduction of the public debt) on an average of five years of peace, ending 5th Jan. 1791, and including sundry extraordinary expenses for the armament of 1787, and for payments to American loyalists, and other articles of a temporary nature, amounted to 16,816,985*l.*

But the peace establishment was estimated by the said committee at 15,969,178*l.*

And that the expense of the year 1792, amounted nearly to that sum.

That the additional permanent charge incurred by the debt created since 1793, exclusive of interest payable by Ireland is ..	£.8,247,215
That the additional charge to be incurred for increased amount of exchequer bills outstanding, is	55,000
Interest on money for satisfying increased navy debt, at 3 per cent. at 75*l.*	120,000
That the additional charge incurred on the consolidated fund is	131,650
That the additional charge incurred for a sum annually voted for the redemption of debt, is	200,000
And that the future peace establishment (exclusive of any charges to be incurred by interest on sums to be paid on winding up the expenses of the war, and of the increase which may take place in the naval or military establishments, and also exclusive of 497,000*l.* interest on loans due by the emperor of Germany, and guaranteed by parliament) may be estimated at	24,723,043

19. That the produce of the tax on income was originally estimated at 10,000,000*l.*; and that it is highly important, for insuring the full benefit of the system now adopted, that effectual measures should be taken for rendering it productive to that amount.

20. That, during the continuance of the tax on income, after the conclusion of the war, if the produce in future years should amount, as so estimated, to 10,000,000*l.* the total annual expenditure may be estimated at about 34,600,000*l.* including therein the said sum of 10,000,000*l.* applicable annually (over and above all other sums in the hands of the commissioners) to the reduction of debt.

21. That the amount of 3 per cent stock created in the years 1798 and 1799, and of which the interest is to be defrayed, and the principal to be redeemed, by the tax on income, is 35,250,000*l.*

22. That, supposing the war to end with the year 1799, the 3 per cent stock to remain, on an average of three years after peace, at 80*l.* and the tax on income to produce 10,000,000*l.* per annum, the capital stock of 35,250,000*l.* together with the interest payable thereon, would be redeemed about the month of April 1803; but, supposing the tax on income to produce hereafter only 7,500,000*l.* (as estimated for the present year), the same capital will not be redeemed till about the month of April 1805.

23. That supposing the war to continue during the year 1800, the expense to be the same as in the present year; 10,000,000*l.* to be raised within the year by the tax on income, and 1,500,000*l.* by imports and exports, in addition to the usual sums in lieu of the land and malt, to the lottery, and to 3,400,000*l.* which may be calculated to be the produce of the consolidated fund (including imprests and repayments expected in 1800), a loan will be requisite to the amount of about 15,000,000*l.* which (taking the 3 per cents at 60) will produce a capital of about 25,500,000*l.* of which (according to the plan pursued in the present year) about 17,000,000*l.* would be on the credit of the tax on income; making together, with the similar capital created in 1798 and 1799, in the whole, capital stock to the amount of 52,000,000*l.* to be redeemed after the peace by the tax on income.

That, supposing the war to end at the conclusion of the year 1800, and the price of the 3 per cent stock to be, during the first five years of peace, on an average 80*l.* and the produce of the tax on income to be 10,000,000*l.* this capital would be discharged in about four years and a half from the 5th April 1801, or nearly at Midsummer 1805; but, supposing the tax on income to produce only 7,500,000*l.* the same capital will not be redeemed till near Michaelmas 1807:

And that, during those periods respectively,

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the annual expenditure (exclusive of any charges which may arise from winding up the expences of the war, or from any increase in the naval and military establishments beyond those of the last peace, but including the extraordinary sums to be applied, as above stated, to the redemption of debt), would be about 34,600,000*l.* on the supposition of the tax on income producing 10,000,000*l.*; and 32,100,000*l.* on the supposition of its producing 7,500,000*l.*

24. That the sums necessary to be raised by loans for the service of the years 1798, 1799, and 1800, (supposing the system for raising such a proportion of the supplies, as is before stated, within the year, had not been adopted) must have been estimated as follows:—For 1798, about 21,500,000.; for 1799 about 24,000,000*l.*; for 1800 about 25,000,000*l.*; which, supposing the price of stocks to have been at 45, would have created a capital of 160,000,000*l.* 3 per cent stock, and a permanent charge (including 1 per cent for the reduction of the capital) of 6,200,000*l.* annually; which, supposing the capital to be redeemed by about forty years, would amount in the whole to 248,000,000*l.* sterling, to be ultimately paid by the public.

25. That for every year of the war which might hereafter take place, supposing the expence thereof to amount to 25,000,000*l.* to be defrayed by loans, and the price of the 3 per cent stock to be at 50, a permanent charge would be incurred for the interest, and 1 per cent on the capital, amounting to 2,000,000*l.* to remain for a period, which may be estimated to be about forty years; and that the charge which would so be incurred for any five years of war (on the same supposition) would require permanent taxes to the amount of 10,000,000*l.*; being equal to the amount of the estimated produce of the temporary tax, which, according to the plan now pursued, is imposed upon income.

26. That the total permanent charge for defraying the expences of the years 1798, 1799, and 1800, according to the plan now adopted may be computed as follows:

In 1798, interest and charges of 7,000,000*l.* beyond what was borrowed on credit of the aid and contribution	577,000
In 1799, on 4,500,000*l.* beyond what was borrowed on credit of tax on income	316,000
In 1800, on 5,000,000*l.* estimated to be borrowed in like manner, at 60*l.*	323,000
Making together ..	1,206,000
Which, supposing the principal to be redeemed as before in forty years, would amount to	48,240,000
And adding thereto, for the year 1798, raised within the year by aid and voluntary contributions and duty on exports and imports	7,000,000
For 1799, by tax on income, and duty on imports and exports..	9,000,000
And for 1800, estimated to be raised in like manner,.....	11,500000
And also the produce of the tax on income, estimated as before during four years and half of peace, for the redemption of 52,00 0,000*l.* capital.....	45,000,000
Would make the whole sum ultimately paid on account of the expenses of these three years	120,740,000

Being less than the charge estimated to be created, by defraying the like expences by loans as before stated, by the sum of above 128,000,000*l.* sterling.

27. That supposing the price of 3 per cent stock to be, on an average after the year 1800, 90*l.* in time of peace, and 75*l.* in time of war, and the proportion of peace and war to be nearly the same as in the course of the last 100 years, the average price of peace and war would be about 85*l.* The fund applicable to the reduction of debt existing previous to 1793, will have reached its greatest amount in 1808: The whole of the capital of debt created in each year of the present war, will be redeemed in about forty years from such year respectively; and the whole of the capital debt, existing previous to 1793, will be redeemed in about forty seven years from the present time.

28. That from the year 1808 to 1833 (at which time the capital debt created in the first year of the present war would be redeemed, and the taxes applicable to the charges thereof would become disposeable) taxes would be set free in the course of each year of peace (on the supposition of the price of stocks before stated) to the amount of 133,000*l.* and in each year of war to the amount of 163,000*l.* making (on the proportion of peace and war above stated) the total amount of taxes set free during that period 4,284,000*l.* That the amount of the sum annually applicable to the reduction of debt, would, in the course of the same period, gradually rise from 5,000,000*l.* to about 10,400,000*l.* and may, at a medium, be computed at 7,700,000*l.* That the permanent loan to be borrowed in each year of war during the same period, would, according to the system now adopted, amount to the same sum. That the interest, and 1 per cent on the capital, of such loan, may, for every such year of war, be computed at about 410,000*l.* and the total charge thereof would, on the supposition above stated, amount to 5,300,000*l.* exceeding the amount of the taxes which would be set free in the same period by about 1,000,000*l.*

29. That, supposing the charges occasioned by each year of war during the period before stated, and the sums raised within the year, to remain as computed for the year 1800, the total amount of that part of the loan ne-

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cessary for the service of every such year (which, according to the plan now adopted, will be to be raised on the credit of the tax on income) will be gradually decreasing during the whole of the period, in proportion as the sums applicable in each year to the reduction of debt increase; and that the period for which the tax on income must afterwards continue in time of peace, on account of each year of war, will decrease in like manner.

30. That (on the suppositions before stated) taxes equal to the amount of the charge created during each year of the present war will be successively set free, from the year 1833 to 1840 inclusive, to the amount in the whole, of about 8,500,000*l.* That taxes to the amount of nearly 2,000,000*l.* will also be set free from the year 1833 to 1846 inclusive; and farther taxes to the amount of 4,200,000*l.* (being the sum applicable from 1808 to the reduction of debt existing previous to 1793) will be set free about 1846, when the whole of the said debt is estimated to be redeemed; making, in the whole (together with the taxes before stated to be set free from 1808 to 1833), near 19,000,000*l.* of taxes set free up to 1846.

31. That, supposing the same number of years of war to 1846, at the same rate of expense, the sums necessary to be raised by loans for defraying the same (if the system for raising a portion of the supplies within the year, as stated, should not be adopted) would amount in each year of the war, to about 25,000,000*l.* the whole to about 450,000,000*l.* sterling; which (supposing the price of 3 per cents to be 50*l.* on an average of war) would amount to 900,000,000*l.* capital stock, and the interest and charges of 1 per cent to 36,000,000*l.* per annum; which, after deducting about 19,000,000*l.* taxes, estimated to be set free within the same period, would require an increase of 17,000,000*l.* of permanent taxes beyond those now existing.

The said Resolutions were agreed to by the House.

The Speaker's Speech to the King on presenting the Money Bills.] July 12. The King came this day to the House of Peers. His Majesty being seated on the throne, Mr. Speaker Addington addressed his Majesty as follows:

"Most gracious Sovereign;

"In the name of the Commons of Great Britain, in parliament assembled, it is my duty humbly to tender to your majesty the bills by which their grants are completed for the public service of the year.

"The magnitude of the supply, and the cheerfulness with which it has been given, combined with the flourishing state of commerce and of the revenue, and with the manifestations of zeal and public spirit which universally prevail, may justly be considered as indications, the most encouraging and decisive, of the abundant and unimpaired resources of the British empire, and of the unshaken firmness of your faithful people. To your Commons, it is a subject of pride and satisfaction to reflect, that in providing for the exigency of the present conjuncture, they have been enabled to adopt a measure which, though attended with sacrifices unprecedented in their amount, is eminently calculated to administer effectual support to public credit; upon the depreciation and expected failure of which, the enemy have long been induced to found the vain hope of destroying the liberties and independence of these kingdoms.

"The conduct, however, of your Commons has not been influenced by a limited and partial view of the situation and circumstances of this country, and of the causes which operate upon its welfare and security. They know that its interests are closely connected with those of other states; and they have accordingly conformed to the principles of a sound and enlarged policy, for affording to your majesty the most ample means of promoting and assisting the exertions of those powers, who justly estimating the danger with which they are threatened, are convinced that a fatal aggravation of it would be the probable consequence of compromise and supineness; and that to be successfully repelled, it must be opposed by such efforts as will be sufficient to prove to the enemy that their system of ambition and conquest is equally nefarious and extravagant, and that its objects are unattainable.

"Your Commons, Sire, are deeply sensible of the importance of the stake for which your majesty is still unavoidably contending, and of the duties which they are bound to discharge. It is, they are persuaded, upon the wisdom and fortitude of the British parliament, that under the favour of Divine Providence, must chiefly depend the preservation of whatever is truly valuable in civil society, and of all that constitutes the happiness of private life. Actuated by these sentiments, and relying with perfect confidence upon the justice and moderation of your majesty's views, your Commons have not hesitated to continue to your majesty that cordial and decided support in the prosecution of the contest, which can alone justify the hope of concluding it by a safe and durable peace."

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The King's Speech at the Close of the Session.] After the royal assent had been given to the said bills, his Majesty delivered the following most gracious Speech:

"My Lords and Gentlemen;

"The favourable appearances which I announced to you, at the commencement of the present session, have since been followed by successes beyond my most sanguine expectations.

"By the progress of the imperial arms, under the command of the Archduke Charles of Austria, a great part of Switzerland has already recovered its ancient religion, laws, and liberties; and the uninterrupted and brilliant victories of the combined armies, under the command of field-marshal Suwarroff, have, in the short period which has elapsed since the opening of the campaign, nearly accomplished the deliverance of Italy from the degrading yoke of the French Republic.

"The decision and energy which distinguish the councils of my ally the emperor of Russia, and the intimate union and concert happily established between us, will enable me to employ, to the greatest advantage, the powerful means which you have entrusted to me, for establishing, on permanent grounds, the security and honour of this country, and the liberty and independence of Europe.

"I have the satisfaction of seeing, that internal tranquillity is in some degree restored in my kingdom of Ireland.

"The removal of the only remaining naval force of the enemy to a distant quarter must nearly extinguish even the precarious hope which the traitorous and disaffected have entertained of foreign assistance.

"But our great reliance for the immediate safety of that country must still rest on the experienced zeal and bravery of my troops of all descriptions, and on the unshaken loyalty and voluntary exertions of my faithful subjects in both kingdoms.

"Its ultimate security can alone be ensured by its intimate and entire union with Great Britain; and I am happy to observe, that the sentiments manifested by numerous and respectable descriptions of my Irish subjects, justify the hope, that the accomplishment of this great and salutary work will be proved to be as much the joint wish, as it unquestionably is the common interest, of both my kingdoms.

"The provisions which you have made for suppressing those dangerous and seditious societies, which had been formed for the purpose of disseminating the destructive principles of the French Revolution, are peculiarly adapted to the circumstances of the times, and have furnished additional security to the established constitution.

"Gentlemen of the House of Commons;

"The unusual sacrifices which you have made in the present moment, on behalf of my subjects, are wisely calculated to meet effectually the exigencies of this great crisis. They have, at the same time, given additional security to public credit, by establishing a system of finance, beneficial alike to yourselves and to posterity; and the cheerfulness with which these heavy burthens are supported, evince at once the good sense, the loyalty, and the public spirit of my people.

"My Lords and Gentlemen;

"It is impossible to compare the events of the present year with the state and prospects of Europe at the distance of but a few months, without acknowledging, in humble thankfulness, the visible interposition of Divine Providence, in averting those dangers which so long threatened the overthrow of all the establishments of the civilized world.

"It may be permitted to us to hope, that the same protecting Providence will continue to us its guidance through the remainder of this eventful contest; and will conduct it finally to such an issue as shall transmit to future ages a memorable example of the instability of all power founded on injustice, usurpation, and impiety; and shall prove the impossibility of ultimately dissolving the connexion between public prosperity and public virtue."

The Lord Chancellor then, by his majesty's command, prorogued the parliament to the 27th of August. It was afterwards further prorogued to the 29th of October.

FOURTH SESSION
OF THE
EIGHTEENTH PARLIAMENT
OF
GREAT BRITAIN.

The King's Speech on Opening the Session.] September 24. 1799. His Majesty opened the Session with the following Speech to both Houses:

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" My Lords and Gentlemen;

" I have called you together at this unusual season, in order to recommend it to you to consider of the propriety of enabling me, without delay, to avail myself, to a further extent of the voluntary services of the Militia, at a moment when an increase of our active force abroad may be productive of the most important and beneficial consequences.

" We have seen the happy effects of the measure which you adopted on this subject in the last session; and the forces which I was thereby enabled to employ have already displayed, in the face of the enemy, a courage, discipline, and steadiness, worthy of the character of British soldiers.

" In the short interval since the close of the last session, our situation and prospects have, under the blessing of Providence, improved beyond the most sanguine expectation. The abilities and valour of the commanders and troops of the combined imperial armies have continued to be eminently displayed. The deliverance of Italy may now be considered as secured, by the result of a campaign, equal in splendor and success to any the most brilliant recorded in history; and I have had the heart-felt satisfaction of seeing the valour of my fleets and armies successfully employed to the assistance of my allies, to the support of our just cause, and to the advancement of the most important interests of the British empire.

" The kingdom of Naples has been rescued from the French yoke, and restored to the dominion of its lawful Sovereign, and my former connexions with that power have been renewed.

" The French expedition to Egypt has been continued to be productive of calamity and disgrace to our enemies, while its ultimate views against our Eastern possessions have been utterly confounded. The desperate attempt which they have lately made, to extricate themselves from their difficulties, has been defeated by the courage of the Turkish forces, directed by the skill, and animated by the heroism of a British officer, with a small portion of my naval force under his command; and the overthrow of that restless and perfidious power, who, instigated by the artifices, and deluded by the promises of the French, had entered into their ambitious and destructive projects in India, has placed the British interests in that quarter in a state of solid and permanent security. The vigilance, decision, and wisdom of the governor general in council on this great and important occasion, and the tried abilities and valour of the commanders, officers, and troops employed under his direction, are entitled to my highest praise.

" There, is, I trust, every reason to expect that the effort which I am making for the deliverance of the United Provinces will prove successful. The British arms have rescued from the possession of the enemy the principal port and naval arsenal of the Dutch republic; and although we have to regret the loss of many brave men in a subsequent attack against the enemy, whose position enabled them to obstruct our progress, I have the strongest ground to expect that the skill of my generals, and the determined resolution and intrepidity of my troops, and of those of my allies, will soon surmount every obstacle; and that the fleet which, under the usurped dominion of France, was destined to co-operate in the invasion of these islands, may speedily I trust, under its ancient standard, partake in the glory of restoring the religion, liberty, and independence of those provinces, so long in intimate union and alliance with this country.

" While you rejoice with me in the events which add so much lustre to the British character, you will, I am persuaded, as cordially join in the sentiments so justly due to the conduct of my good and faithful ally the emperor of Russia; to his magnanimity and wisdom, directing to so many quarters of Europe the force of his extensive and powerful empire, we are, in a great degree, indebted for the success of our own efforts, as well as for the rapid and favourable change in the general situation of affairs. I have directed copies to be laid before you of those engagements which have consolidated and cemented a connexion so consonant to the permanent interests of my empire, and so important at the present moment to every part of the civilised world.

" Gentlemen of the House of Commons;

" The ample Supplies which you have granted to me, in the course of the last sessions, will, I trust, so nearly provide for the exigencies of the public service, even on the extensive scale which our present operations require, as to enable me, without further aid, to continue those

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exertions to the close of the present year:—but, in order to afford you the convenience of a longer recess, I recommend it to you to consider of providing for the expense which will be necessary in the early part of the ensuing year; and with this view I have ordered the proper estimates to be laid before you.

"My Lords, and Gentlemen;

"In pursuance of your recommendation, I judged it proper to communicate to my two Houses of Parliament in Ireland at the close of their last session, the sentiments which you had expressed to me respecting an incorporating Union with that kingdom. The experience of every day confirms me in the persuasion, that signal benefit would be derived to both countries from that important measure; and I trust that the disposition of my parliament there will be found to correspond with that which you have manifested for the accomplishment of a work which would tend so much to add to the security and happiness of all my Irish subjects, and to consolidate the strength and prosperity of the empire."

His Majesty then withdrew.

Debate in the Lords on the Address of Thanks.] His Majesty's Speech having been read,

The Marquis of *Buckingham* said, he felt it incumbent on him to call the attention of their lordships to some of the leading points in the speech from the throne, and in this view what struck him most forcibly were the well-founded allusions which were made to the steadiness and bravery of the British troops in the late glorious exploits upon the continent, in which these levies taken from that part of the British forces to which he had the honour to belong, bore so distinguished a share. Yet it was not their conduct in action which most merited his approbation; when he contemplated the alacrity, with which they entered themselves for foreign service, their merits in his mind were considerably enhanced. Having said thus much, he must notice the obvious good policy of pursuing our late brilliant successes, by expeditiously adopting the measures recommended from the Throne. He did not think that, under the present circumstances of the nation, such measures could create the slightest degree of alarm. Circumstances had recently occurred, which indeed rendered it proper to make some material alterations in the militia establishments: by the complete subjugation of the Dutch navy, there no longer existed a necessity for a fleet in the North Sea, nor for a powerful military force to be cantoned along our Northern and Eastern coasts. It would be politic, however, to avail ourselves in other quarters of the forces which would be thus free to act in any other shape, and proceeding in that manner, he deemed it best to do it through the medium of the militia corps. It struck him, that the present national circumstances would even warrant a reduction of the militia force to its original establishment in point of numbers. By the adoption of the measure he alluded to, the nation would be placed in a greater degree of security, by being enabled to follow up hostile operations, to cement our continental alliance, and to meet the exertions of the enemy, and, above all, to recover one of our oldest and most valuable alliances. A measure of the nature proposed did not appear to him to involve the slightest breach of parliamentary faith. The events of the late campaign were such as called for our most grateful acknowledgments to Providence. He would call the consideration of their lordships to the wanton aggression made by the common enemy of all religion and government upon a power with whom they were then in the relations of peace and amity, by an attack upon one of its distant provinces, Egypt; but in which nefarious attempt they were baffled by the unexampled gallantry of a handful of British seamen, aided by the uninformed bravery of a few Turkish soldiers, but led on by an officer who merited the most grateful acknowledgments from his country. Indeed, when he contemplated the exploit in question, he was lost in admiration. He then adverted to the recent operations in India, and spoke in the highest strain of commendation of those councils, and the military gallantry by which the usurper Tippoo Saib was humbled to the dust. His lordship next dwelt in strains of eulogium upon the wise and energetic measures adopted by the Emperor of Russia. He then passed to the affairs of the sister kingdom; the disadvantage of her present situation; her still existing distractions: and concluded by expressing his conviction that the popular sentiment in favour of a union with this country was daily gaining ground. Even the peasantry

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themselves now looked forward to the measure in the hopes of relief from it. The noble marquis then moved an Address, which was an echo of the Speech from the throne.

Lord *Amherst*, after passing a panegyric on the services of the militia, and defending the proposed measure with regard to them, said:—My lords, I confess I find it impossible to contemplate all that has been done by the arms of England abroad, to look at empires saved, at kingdoms restored, at hostile fleets and armies swept from the face of the globe, at the support of friendly and the extermination of hostile powers; and all this, achieved as it has been, in many instances, by the single arm of Great Britain—or turning from this prospect, to look at the proud and inspiriting array of armies embattled for the defence of our sovereign and our country—without feeling, I hope, a just and blameless pride in the military strength and glory of Great Britain—without feeling it a matter of self congratulation, that the calumny, which not many years ago was so common in the mouth of our vaunting enemy, that our commercial prosperity had depressed and overlaid our martial spirit, stands refuted in the face of the world, and what is of more real importance, in our own conscious feelings—without rejoicing that the British character is not so enervated by the blessings we so pre-eminently enjoy, but that we have still the sense to know, that by the same virtue and valour which originally won them to us, by these alone, can they securely be maintained—that though the steady and settled course of justice and law, the arts of peaceful industry and flourishing commerce make war almost unknown to us as a profession, we have nevertheless not forgotten that the spirit to defend is essential in exact proportion to the value of what is to be defended. But though it is impossible to repress these feelings of proud and honest satisfaction, it is by no means by the impulse of military glory alone that we could be justified in engaging in a new mode of war, unless the object of our continental expeditions were precisely the same with that which animates exertions in all other parts of the system, that is, the upholding the independence of this country, and the liberties and independence of Europe. I know that there is a strong prejudice against all continental operations whatsoever, that they link us too closely with continental powers; that they render us dependent on the fidelity of allies to whom we look for co-operation; and that such a plan of action once entered upon leads to indefinite and complicated engagements, in which the interests of Great Britain are not unfrequently neglected. Not to trust too far to foreign powers, where they have an obvious interest in deceiving, or a manifest temptation to betray, is certainly a matter of no doubtful policy. But surely it is no less unwise to reject all co-operation, which may be useful so far as it goes, because it may not go throughout by the same road, or to the same end, to which our views are directed. But if ever there was a case of continental operation in which this caution would not apply, it is the present; where, the contest is for an object confessedly touching Great Britain more nearly than any other continental object, the liberation of our old ally from the yoke of our inveterate enemy; where in the course of our present success, so far as it has gone, we have already effected an object so purely British, and so great in its extent, that in former times it would have been considered alone as the great and marking feature of a campaign, or even of a war—the capture of the Dutch fleet; and where the ally co-operating with us, besides being that power which, from the unexampled magnanimity and liberality of its conduct, has best deserved to be exempted from all suspicion of selfish, much more of treacherous dispositions, besides being that power to which one-third of that part of Europe which France had subjugated already owes its deliverance, is that which has, perhaps, the least visible interest of any of the powers whom we could have associated in our enterprise, except so far as every power has a common interest in the success of every measure which tends to the diminution of the dominion of French power, of the influence of French principles, and the operation and tenor of French arms. For an object, therefore, in its general nature so essentially interesting to this country, touching at once so nearly its honour and its power—for an object already so splendidly begun, and which a vigorous perseverance may bring at no great distance of time to a successful issue, we can have no scruple in using our best endeavours to give every additional strength to the arms of the country, and every support which they deserve to

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those who have so gallantly opened the career of glory to their countrymen. And it cannot be entertained as any material objection to resorting to voluntary zeal for the augmentation of force which is now in question, that to zeal of the same description we are indebted for the preservation of the internal peace of this kingdom. That voluntary zeal has saved Ireland to this kingdom and to herself: and I doubt not that the same zeal, if permitted to exert itself, will restore Holland to her alliance with this empire, in restoring her to her rank among the nations of the world. Impressed with these sentiments, I beg leave to second the Address.

The Address was agreed to *nem. diss.*

The King's Answer to the Lords Address.] To the Address of the Lords, his Majesty returned this Answer:

"My Lords;—I receive with great pleasure this very dutiful and loyal Address. The sentiments which you express are conformable to the whole tenor of your conduct; and if the rapid improvement of our situation and prospects should lead, as I trust it will, to ultimate success in this just cause, I shall ever acknowledge, with pride and satisfaction, how much, under the favour of Providence, this issue must be ascribed to the energy and wisdom manifested by my two Houses of Parliament throughout every period of this arduous contest."

Debate in the Commons on the Address of Thanks.] His Majesty's Speech having been read,

Mr. *Shaw Lefevre* rose to move an Address to his Majesty; and after expressing his inability to do justice to the great achievements which had taken place since the opening of the campaign, he observed he had at least the satisfaction of knowing, that exploits so glorious required no eloquence to enhance their value. He then described the gallant efforts of the archduke, the successes of marshal Suwarrow, and the essential services of captain Trowbridge in the territory of Naples; and to all these collectively we might ascribe the deliverance of Italy from the degrading yoke of France. But, important as this deliverance was to the general interests of Europe, it had been equalled, if not surpassed, in another quarter of the globe, by a series of conquests won by our own arms—the entire defeat of Tippoo Sultaun's army, the capture of Seringapatam, and the destruction of a treacherous foe. The victory there was exclusively our own, and might in its effects be considered as having placed the British interests in that country in a state of permanent security. Great praise was due to the governor-general in council, and to the commanders in chief, for their vigilance and cordial co-operation during that short but severe contest.—He then described in strong colours the unwearied efforts of sir Sidney Smith, in resisting and ultimately defeating Bonaparté's superior force in Egypt, yet our successes did not stop there: we could not but applaud the first operations and progress of the grand armament in Holland; to the naval talents of a Mitchell we were indebted for collecting a numerous fleet in a dangerous sea during two successive and severe storms. To his judicious arrangements we owed the surrender of that fleet which, under the usurped dominion of France, was destined to co-operate in the invasion of these islands.—Nor ought we to forget how essentially our brave army had contributed to this last success: they had obtained for us the dominion, by the possession of Helder: for them was reserved the glory of taking those forts and batteries which had hitherto been considered as impregnable.—If such had been the important advantages already obtained, could we hesitate a moment to improve them? The naval force of that enemy was no longer at their command; with its usurpers we had now only to contend on shore. Surely, then, our military force in that quarter ought to be strengthened by all possible means; fortunately for us, those means were at hand. The mode of accomplishing an object so essential was adopted at the close of the last session. But the act then passed, our vast militia force, however necessary at a former period of the war, was becoming daily less and less so, and the country was burthened with an army of defence, while its regular forces could scarce be recruited on any terms. The act alluded to was admirably framed for giving relief in both these difficulties—by reducing that defensive force, and at the same time converting it into an army ready for offensive service within any part of Europe. If such had been the benefits arising from this act, why not avail ourselves of them to a farther exent? The formidable defensive array of the country increased within a short period to such an honourable extent,

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rendered it unnecessary to keep up a greater body of militia than its original number. Why, then, not convert all above that number into troops of the line (with their own free consent, and for a limited service), and thus at once create a well disciplined, disposable army, ready for all European service, and zealous to share the glory of their gallant comrades? He concluded with congratulating the House on the prosperous state of our public credit, our revenue, and our commerce. Surely the enjoyment of these blessings was of itself an encouragement to persevere in the same line of conduct which had obtained them for us. Much, on all these accounts, we owed to the firmness and vigour of parliament—much to the wisdom and energy of his majesty's councils—much to the solid good sense of the nation at large; but the main pillars of our prosperity and salvation had been, and ever must be, attachment to our country, loyalty to our king, and devotion to our God! May that God still go forth with our fleets and armies, and continue to bless us with victory and success.—The hon. gentleman then moved an address, which was an echo of the speech from the throne.

Colonel *Elford* rose to second the Address. He said, that in considering the propriety of a farther reduction of the militia forces, with a view to increase the power of prosecuting our late successes, it was impossible not to advert to the advantages which have already accrued from the voluntary services of that body. When his majesty was empowered to accept of the offer made by many militia corps to serve in Ireland, much was said of the attack that was made on the constitutional force of the country, and many predictions and assertions were made, that the ruin of that body would be the inevitable consequence of the measure. He believed the warmest well-wishers of that measure had never been absurd enough to assert that no inconveniences would attend the adoption of it; but where was to be found any great political operation, in which all the benefits were on one side, and all the evils on the other? The advantages which had arisen from sending regiments of the British militia to Ireland were beyond all calculation. Of the general prosperity of the country, it was unnecessary for him to speak in addition to what had already been said. He trusted that our successes would warrant us in looking, not very remotely, to that great object of his majesty's paternal care and solicitude, a safe and honourable peace. The means of effectually obtaining this great object would be, by a vigorous prosecution of the war, and by convincing the enemy, that we were determined to carry it on, as long as their obstinacy and folly should render it necessary.

The Address was agreed to.

The King's Answer to the Commons Address.] To the Address of the Commons, his Majesty returned this Answer:

"Gentlemen; I return you my particular thanks for this dutiful address. I receive with the highest satisfaction your congratulations on the happy improvement of our affairs, which I shall ever principally ascribe, under the blessing of Providence, to the wisdom, perseverance, and spirit of my parliament, guiding and animating the efforts of a brave and loyal people, in support of their dearest interests.

Copies of the Treaties with Russia.] Sept. 26. The following Treaties were laid before both Houses, by his Majesty's command:

PROVISIONAL TREATY between his Majesty the King of Great Britain and his Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias. Done at Saint Petersburgh, the 29th-18th December 1798.

In the name of the Most Holy and Indivisible Trinity. His majesty the king of Great Britain and his majesty the emperor of all the Russias, in consequence of the alliance and friendship subsisting between them, being desirous to enter into a concert of measures, such as may contribute in the most efficacious manner to oppose the successes of the French arms, and the extension of the principles of anarchy, and to bring about a solid peace, together with the re-establishment of the balance of Europe, have judged it worthy their most serious consideration and earnest solicitude to endeavour, if possible, to reduce France within its former limits, as they subsisted before the revolution.

They have in consequence agreed to conclude a provisional treaty, and for this purpose they have named as their plenipotentiaries, namely, his majesty the king of Great Britain, sir Charles Whitworth, knight of the Bath, his envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary at the imperial court of Russia; and his majesty the emperor of all the Russias, the chancellor prince Bezborodko, a privy councillor, director general of the posts, senator, and knight of the orders of Saint

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Andrew, of Saint Alexander Newsky, of Saint Anne, and grand cross of those of Saint John of Jerusalem, and of Saint Vladimir, of the first class; the Sieur Kotschoubey, vice chancellor, privy councillor and chamberlain, knight of the order of Saint Alexander Newsky, and grand cross of that of Saint Vladimir, of the second class; the Sieur Rostopsin, a privy councillor, member of the college for foreign affairs, knight of the order of Saint Alexander Newsky, and of that of Saint Anne, of the first class; who, after having reciprocally communicated their full powers, have concluded and agreed upon the following articles:

Art. 1. The two contracting powers, in the intention of inducing the king of Prussia to take an active part in the war against the common enemy, propose to employ all their endeavours to obtain that end. Immediately on his Prussian majesty's consenting to this measure, his imperial majesty of all the Russias is ready to afford him a succour of land forces, and he destines for that purpose, 45,000 men, infantry and cavalry, with the necessary artillery, upon the following conditions.

Art. 2. This body of troops shall be put in motion as soon as the high contracting parties shall be assured of the determination of his Prussian majesty being conformable to what has been before stated. With regard to the farther movements of this corps, and its combined operations with the Prussian troops, his majesty the emperor of all the Russias will arrange them with his majesty the king of Prussia, and communication shall also be made of them to his Britannic majesty, in order that by such a concert between the high allies, the military operations against the enemy may be made with the greater success, and that the object which is proposed may the more easily be attained.

Art. 3. In order to facilitate to his majesty the emperor of all the Russias the means to take such an active part in the present war against the French, his Britannic majesty engages to furnish the pecuniary succours hereinafter specified; his imperial majesty of all the Russias nevertheless reserving to himself the right to recall the aforesaid body of troops into his own territories, if by any unforeseen event the whole of this pecuniary succour should not be furnished him.

Art. 4. The amount and the nature of these pecuniary succours have been fixed and regulated upon the following footing: 1. In order to enable his imperial majesty of all the Russias to expedite as soon as possible, and in the most convenient manner, the troops destined to be employed in favour of the good cause, his majesty the king of Great Britain engages, as soon as he shall receive advice that the Russian troops, in consequence of the determination of his majesty the king of Prussia, are to march, in order to co-operate with those of his said majesty, to pay, for the first and most urgent expenses, 225,000*l.* sterling, dividing the payments in such manner as that 75,000*l.* sterling should be paid as soon as those troops shall have passed the Russian frontiers; that the second payment, amounting to the same sum, should be made on the expiration of the first three months, and on the commencement of the fourth; and that the third payment, completing the sum total, should be made in like manner, after three months and on the beginning of the seventh. 2. His majesty the king of Great Britain engages also to furnish to his majesty the emperor of all the Russias, a subsidy of 75,000*l.* sterling per month, to be computed from the day on which the corps of troops above mentioned shall pass the Russian frontiers. This subsidy shall be paid at the commencement of each month, and being destined for the appointments and maintenance of the troops, it shall be continued during the space of twelvemonths, unless peace should be made sooner. 3. The two high contracting parties, besides, shall come to an understanding, before the expiration of the term of a year above specified, whether, in case the war should not be terminated, the subsidy above mentioned shall be continued.

Art. 5. The two high contracting parties engage not to make either peace or armistice, without including each other, and without concerting with each other. But if, through any unforeseen events, his Britannic majesty should be under the necessity of terminating the war, and thereby of discontinuing the payment of the subsidy before the expiration of the twelve months above stipulated, he engages, in that case, to pay three months advance of the subsidy agreed upon, of 75,000*l.* sterling, reckoning from the day on which the information shall be received by the general commanding the Russian troops.

Art. 6. In like manner, if any aggression on Russia should take place, by which his majesty the emperor should be obliged to recall his army into his own dominions, the abovementioned subsidy shall in such case only be paid up to the day on which the army shall re-enter the Russian frontiers.

Art. 7. His majesty the emperor of all the Russias shall come to an understanding with his ally, his majesty the king of Prussia, respecting all the other expenses which this corps of troops and its operations may require. His Britannic majesty shall take no farther share in those expenses than the sum of 37,500*l.* sterling per month, during all the time that the above-mentioned troops shall be employed, by virtue of this treaty, for the common cause. That sum shall be advanced by his majesty the emperor of all the Russias; but his Britannic majesty acknowledges it as a debt due by Great Britain to Russia, which he will discharge after the conclusion of a peace made by mutual agreement. The mode and dates of the payment shall be settled by mutual concert, according to the reciprocal convenience of the two allied powers.

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Art. 8. The above-mentioned subsidies shall in this manner be considered as a sufficient succour for all the expenses, including those which may be necessary for the return of the Russian army.

Art. 9. This treaty shall be considered as provisional; and its execution, as it has been stated above, shall not take place until his majesty the king of Prussia shall be determined to turn his forces against the common enemy; but in case he should not do so, the two high contracting parties reserve to themselves the right and the power to take, for the good of their affairs, and the success of the salutary end they have in view, other measures analogous to the times and circumstances, and to agree then upon those which in such a case they shall judge to be most necessary, adopting always as a basis (inasmuch as it shall be compatible) the stipulations of the present treaty. His imperial majesty of all the Russias, in order nevertheless to give a still more striking proof of his sincere dispositions, and of his desire to be as much as possible useful to his allies, promises to put, during the course of the negotiation with his Prussian majesty, and even previous to its termination, the above-mentioned corps of 45,000 men, upon such a footing, that they may immediately be employed wherever, according to a previous concert amongst the allies, the utility of the common cause shall require.

Art. 10. The present provisional treaty shall be ratified by his Britannic majesty and his imperial majesty of all the Russias, and the ratifications shall be exchanged here in the space of two months, to be computed from the day of the signature, or sooner, if it can be done.

In witness whereof, we, the under-signed, furnished with the full powers of his majesty the king of Great Britain and the emperor of all the Russias, have in their names signed the present treaty, and have affixed the seals of our arms thereto. Done at Saint Petersburgh, the 29-18th December, 1798.

(L. S.) Chas. Whitworth.
(L. S.) Are. Pce. de Bezborodko.
(L. S.) Kotschoubey.
(L. S.) Rostopsin.

Declaration.

By the provisional treaty concluded between his majesty the king of Great Britain, and his majesty the emperor of all the Russias, the 29th-18th December, 1798, it is stipulated that the body of 45,000 men furnished by his said imperial majesty for the support of the common cause, should be employed in co-operating with the troops of his Prussian majesty, if that sovereign should be induced to join his forces to those of their majesties; but the endeavours which their royal and imperial majesties have employed for this purpose having been unsuccessful, and that prince persisting in his adherence to his system of neutrality, the two high contracting parties, in order to neglect nothing on their part which may contribute to the success of the good cause, have resolved that the said body of 45,000 men, originally destined to second the hostile demonstrations of Prussia against France, shall be equally employed against the common enemy in whatever other quarter their majesties may judge it to be most advantageous to their common operations. For this purpose the plenipotentiaries of their said royal and imperial majesties have signed the present declaration, which is to be considered as forming a part of the provisional treaty abovementioned, concluded between the two courts the 29th-18th December, 1798.

Done at St. Petersburgh, this 29th-18th June, 1799.

(L. S.) Chs. Whitworth
(L. S.) Le Comte de Kotschoubey
(L. S.) Le Comte de Rostopsin.

Convention between his Majesty the king of Great Britain, and his Majesty the emperor of all the Russias, done at St. Petersburgh, the 22d-11th of June, 1799.

In the name of the most holy and indivisible Trinity. His majesty the king of Great Britain, and his majesty the emperor of all the Russias, in consequence of the friendship and the ties of intimate alliance which exist between them, and of their common and sincere co-operation in the present war against the French, having constantly in their view to use every means in their power most effectually to distress the enemy, have judged that the expulsion of the French from the Seven united provinces, and the deliverance of the latter from the yoke under which they have so long groaned, were objects worthy of their particular consideration; and wishing at the same time to give effect, as far as possible, to a design of that importance, their said majesties have resolved to conclude with each other a convention relative to this plan, and to the most proper means for carrying it into the most speedy execution. For this purpose they have named as their plenipotentiaries, to wit, his majesty the king of Great Britain, sir Charles Whitworth, his envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to the imperial court of Russia, knight of the order of the Bath; and his majesty the emperor of all the Russias, the count of Kotschoubey, his vice-chancellor, actual privy councillor, actual chamberlain, knight of the order of saint Alexander Newsky, commander of that of Saint John of Jerusalem, and Great Cross of the order of Vladimir, of the second class; and the count of Rostopsin, his actual privy councillor, member of the college of foreign affairs, director general of the posts, knight of the order of Saint Alexander Newsky and of Saint Anne, of the first class, Great Chancellor and Great Cross of that of Saint John of Jerusalem; who, after having reci-

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procally communicated to each other their full powers, have agreed upon the following articles:

Art. 1. His majesty the king of Great Britain, thinking that the object above announced cannot be better attained than by the aid of a body of Russian troops, his imperial majesty, notwithstanding the efforts which he has already made, and the difficulties of his employing an additional body of forces, to act at a distance from his dominions, has nevertheless, in consequence of his constant solicitude in favour of the good cause, consented to furnish seventeen battalions of infantry, two companies of artillery, one company of pioneers, and one squadron of hussars, making in all 17,593 men, to be destined for the said expedition to Holland; but as that number of troops, according to the plan proposed by his Britannic majesty, is not sufficient, and as it has been judged that 30,000 men would be necessary for that purpose, his said majesty will, on his side, furnish 13,000 men of English troops, or, at least, 8,000 men, if that smaller number should be deemed sufficient; and amongst whom there shall be a proportion of cavalry sufficient for the services of such an army.

Art. 2. This corps of troops, of 17,593 men, together with the necessary artillery, shall assemble at Revel, in order that they may be from thence conveyed to their destination, either in English or other vessels freighted by his Britannic majesty.

Art. 3. In order to enable his majesty the emperor of all the Russias to afford to the common cause this additional and efficacious succour, his majesty the king of Great Britain engages to furnish the undermentioned subsidies, upon the condition that his imperial majesty of all the Russias shall have a right to recall into his dominions the above-mentioned corps of troops, if, through any unforeseen events, such subsidies should not be regularly furnished to him.

Art. 4. The amount and the nature of those pecuniary succours have been settled and regulated in the following manner: 1. In order to enable his imperial majesty to assemble and expedite this corps, as soon and as well equipped as possible, his majesty the king of Great Britain engages, as soon as he shall receive advice that the above-mentioned troops have reached the place of their rendezvous, that is to say, at Revel, and that it shall be declared that they are ready to embark (whether the transports be arrived or not) to pay for the first and most urgent expenses, the sum of 88,000*l.* sterling, dividing the payments into two parts; (to wit) that 44,000*l.* be paid immediately after it shall have been declared, either by the commander in chief of that corps to the English commissary, or by the minister of his imperial majesty to the minister of his Britannic majesty resident at Saint Petersburgh, that the said corps is ready; and that the second payment, completing the sum total of 88,000*l.* sterling, shall take place three months afterwards, and at the commencement of the fourth: 2. His majesty the king of Great Britain engages, in like manner, to furnish to his majesty the emperor of all the Russias, a subsidy of 44,000*l.* sterling per month, to be computed from the day on which the above-mentioned corps of troops shall be ready. This subsidy shall be paid at the commencement of each month, and destined for the appointments and the entertainment of the troops; it shall be continued until they shall return into Russian ports, in English or other vessels, freighted by his Britannic majesty.

Art. 5. If this corps of Russian troops should meet with difficulties in procuring, during the expedition to which it is destined, or in case of its wintering as shall be hereafter mentioned, in England, or during the voyages it shall have to make, its necessary subsistence, by means of the measures which the Russian commanders or commissaries may take for that purpose, his Britannic majesty, upon the requisition of the minister of his majesty the emperor of all the Russias, residing at his court, shall furnish whatever may be necessary to the Russian troops; and an exact account shall be kept of all the provisions and other articles so delivered, in order that their value may be afterwards deducted from the subsidy; such provisions and other articles being valued at the price paid for them by his majesty, for his own troops.

Art. 6. As the transport of the horses necessary for the officers, the artillery, and the baggage, would require a great many vessels, and as that arrangement would lead to many other inconveniencies, and more particularly to that of a delay prejudicial to the above-mentioned expedition, his Britannic majesty, engages to furnish, at his own expense, the necessary number of horses, according to the statement which shall be delivered, and to have them conveyed to the place where the Russian troops are to act; his said majesty will, in like manner, maintain them at his own expense, during the whole time that those troops shall be employed, and until they shall be re-embarked, in order to return to the ports of Russia; his Britannic majesty will then dispose of them in such manner as he shall judge proper.

Art. 7. In case that the Russian troops, after having terminated in Holland the projected expedition, or in consequence of its being deferred, through any unforeseen circumstances, should not be able to return into the ports of his imperial majesty, during the favourable season, his majesty the king of Great Britain engages to receive them into his dominions, to provide them there with good quarters, and all other advantages, until the troops shall be able to return on the opening of the navigation, or shall be employed

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upon some other destination, which shall be previously settled between their royal and imperial majesties.

Art. 8. As the principal object of the employment of this corps of troops is a sudden attack to be made on Holland, by means of which his Britannic majesty hopes to produce there a favourable change; as, besides, no fixed term for the continuance of the subsidies stipulated, whilst, on the other hand, the said troops, after their return to Russia, must be re-conducted to their ordinary quarters, mostly at a great distance; and as the marches which they will have to make will require considerable expenses; his majesty the king of Great Britain hereby engages to make good this charge, by a payment of subsidies for two months, to be computed from the day of the arrival of those troops in Russian ports: In like manner, his majesty the emperor of all the Russias, without fixing any term, reserves to himself the right of causing the said corps of troops to return into his dominions, in the spring of the next year, 1800, or if any hostile aggression upon Russia, or any other important event, should render it necessary, in these two cases, the above-mentioned engagement of his Britannic majesty, concerning the payment of two months subsidy, shall equally take place.

Art. 9. As it is understood that the expedition to Holland, which has given rise to the present convention, is to be effected in common by Russian and English troops, each party shall follow, relative to the employment and to the command of the troops, literally the treaty of defensive alliance concluded between the two high contracting parties, the 7th-18th February, 1795: In like manner, if any difficulties should arise, either between the commanders of the respective forces, or otherwise, which may regard the above-mentioned troops of his majesty, the emperor of all the Russias, the solution of such difficulties shall be looked for in the stipulations of the said treaty of the year 1795; or, likewise, in that concluded with the court of Vienna, the 3rd-14th July, 1792.

Art. 10.—The present convention shall be ratified by his majesty the king of Great Britain and by his majesty the emperor of all the Russias; and the ratification shall be exchanged here in the space of two months, to be computed from the day of its signature, or sooner, if it can be done.

In witness whereof, we the under-signed, furnished with full powers, by his majesty the king of Great Britain, and by his majesty the emperor of all the Russias, have, in their names, signed the present convention, and have affixed thereto the seal of our arms. Done at Saint Petersburgh, the 22nd-11th June 1799. (L. S.) Chs. Whitworth,

(L. S.) Le Comte de Kotschoubey

(L. S.) Le Comte de Rostopsin.

Separate Article.—1.—Although it be stated in Art. 2 of the Convention concluded this day. That the corps of Russian troops forming 17,593 men, destined for the expedition to Holland, shall be conveyed to its destination in English, or other vessels, freighted by his majesty the king of Great Britain; nevertheless, in order so much the more to facilitate this important enterprise, his majesty the emperor of all the Russias consents to furnish six ships, five frigates, and two transport vessels, which being armed *en flutes*, will receive on board as many troops as they shall be able to contain, whilst the remainder of the said corps shall be embarked on board English, or other transport vessels, freighted by his Britannic majesty.

Art. 2.—His majesty the emperor of all the Russias will lend these ships upon the following conditions: 1. There shall be paid by England, upon their quitting the port of Cronstadt in order to go to the place of rendezvous, which is Revel, the sum of 58,927*l.* 10*s.* as a subsidy for the expenses of equipment, &c. for three months, to be computed from the day, as it is above stated, of their departure from Cronstadt: 2. After the expiration of these three months, his Britannic majesty shall continue the same subsidies (that is to say) of 19,642½ pounds sterling a month; which shall be paid at the commencement of each month: 3. Independently of this pecuniary succour, his Britannic majesty shall provide for the subsistence of the crews; and the officers and sailors shall be treated on the same footing as are the English officers and sailors in time of war, and as are the Russian officers and sailors, who are at present in the squadron of his imperial majesty which is united to the English squadron: 4. All these stipulations shall have full and entire effect, until the return of the above-mentioned ships and frigates into Russian ports.

3. If it should happen, contrary to all expectation, that those six ships, five frigates, and two transport vessels, should not be able through some unforeseen event to return to Russia before the close of the present campaign, his Britannic majesty engages to admit them into the ports of England, where they shall receive every possible assistance, both for necessary repairs, and for the accommodation of the crews and officers.

4. As the six ships, five frigates, and two transports above-mentioned, having been originally intended for another destination, were furnished with provisions for three months, his Britannic majesty, instead of furnishing them in kind, as it is stated in the second article, engages to pay, according to an estimate which shall be made, the value of these provisions. With regard to the officers, his majesty the king of Great Britain will adopt the same principle as has been followed until the present time respecting the officers of the Russian squadron which is joined to the naval forces of England; that shall serve as rule for in-

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demnifying them for the preparations which they may have made for the campaign, such as it had been originally intended to take place. This separate article shall be considered as forming part of the Convention above-mentioned, as being inserted therein word for word; and it shall be ratified and the ratification exchanged, in the same manner.

In witness whereof, we the under-signed, furnished with full powers of his majesty the king of Great Britain, and of his majesty the emperor of all the Russias, have in their name, signed the present separate article, and have affixed thereto the seal of our arms. Done at Saint Petersburgh this 22nd-11th June, 1799.

(L. S.) CHAS. WHITWORTH.
(L. S.) LE COMTE DE KOTSCHOUBEY
(L. S.) LE COMTE DE ROSTOPSIN.

Copy of the treaty with the king of the Two Sicilies.] The following Treaty was laid before both Houses by his Majesty's Command:

TREATY OF ALLIANCE between his Majesty and the King of the Two Sicilies, signed at Naples, the 1st December, 1798.

His majesty the king of Great Britain, and his majesty the king of the two Sicilies, seeing that the peace which they had endeavoured to restore to Italy has only furnished an opportunity to the persons exercising the powers of government in France to extend their conquests still further, to the destruction of all moral and political order; and seeing from thence the danger which awaits all other lawful governments, from the design openly manifested of subjecting all Italy to the same spirit of disorder and anarchy; have thought it expedient to renew the connexion which had been formed between them by the Convention of the 12th July 1798; and to unite by a strict alliance, the forces and means which are at their disposal, in order to oppose a solid barrier against the danger with which they are threatened from an unbounded ambition; and in order to provide for the future defence and security of their people, and the restoration of moral and public order in Italy.

In consequence their Britannic and Sicilian majesties have authorized their respective plenipotentionaries: (that is to say) his Britannic majesty, sir William Hamilton, one of his majesty's most honourable privy council, knight of the order of the Bath, his majesty's envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to his said Sicilian majesty; and his Sicilian majesty, the most illustrious and most excellent lord Martin Mastrilli marquis of Gallo, of the dukes of Marigliano, his gentleman of the chamber, knight of the royal order of St. Januarius, his councillor and secretary of state for the department of foreign affairs, of the marine, and of commerce, knight of the order of the golden fleece, who after having communicated and exchanged their respective full powers, have agreed to the following articles.

Art.—1. The Convention stipulated between their Britannic and Sicilian majesties, in the year 1793, shall serve as a basis to the present treaty; in consequence the two high contracting parties engage to make common cause in the present war against France, and to concert together their naval and military operations, particularly in the Mediterranean.

Art. 2.—The high contracting parties reciprocally guarantee to each other their dominions against the common enemy, and engage not to lay down their arms, unless by common consent, without having obtained the entire and full restitution of all the places, towns, and territories which respectively belonged to them before the commencement of the present war, and of which the enemy may have taken possession during the course of the war.

Art. 3.—In consequence of this mutual engagement, their Britannic and Sicilian majesties shall concert, in the most confidential manner, on the military and naval operations which the ministers of the two powers, resident at Naples shall think it expedient to undertake, as well as on the employment of the naval and military force which may be appointed to such service.

Art. 4.—With this view his Britannic majesty engages to keep in the Mediterranean sea until a peace, and as long as the danger of the Two Sicilies, and the operations against the common enemy shall require it, a fleet of ships of war decidedly superior to that of the enemy, in order to provide by that means for the safety of the dominions of his Sicilian majesty.

Art. 5.—All the ports of the Two Sicilies shall be open to the squadron of his Britannic majesty, without any exception or restriction whatsoever; and his Sicilian majesty promises to grant to it the most ample power of providing itself in his dominions with every thing which it may require, both in respect to naval and military stores and to provisions. For which purpose his Britannic majesty will appoint a commissary to superintend the details of such supplies, and the Neapolitan government will grant him every assistance to enable him to acquire them at current and moderate prices.

Art. 6.—His majesty the king of the Two Sicilies will join to the squadron of his Britannic majesty four ships of the line, four frigates, and four small ships of war, in order that they may be employed in concert with it. But if the two powers should prefer, for the success of their operations, to employ a greater number of small vessels in the room of the ships, his Sicilian majesty promises to substitute in the place of his above-mentioned

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contingent, a number of gun boats and bomb ketches, and other small armed vessels in proportion to the ships which it shall be agreed to withdraw.

Art. 7.—His Sicilian majesty also engages to recruit the squadron of his Britannic majesty, with such a number of sailors as it shall require, to the amount of three thousand sailors, provided that they be put upon the same footing as English sailors on board the said squadron of his Britannic majesty, both as to bounty money on their entering, and to pay, during their continuance in his service; and also as to all other advantages and profits enjoyed by the English sailors on board the said squadron. The sailors furnished by his Sicilian majesty shall not be employed out of the Mediterranean sea, nor engaged for a longer period than that of the continuance of the present war.

Art. 8.—The ships of war, of the two contracting powers, employed to act as convoys to the merchantmen of their respective nations, shall indiscriminately take under their convoy and protection the merchantmen of either, which may have the same destination.

Art. 9.—During the present war the ports of the two Sicilies shall be shut against all French ships, either of war or trade, and his Sicilian majesty will prohibit his subjects from all trade with France of any kind whatsoever. He will not permit the vessels of other nations to export from his dominions to the ports of France any species of provisions, or of warlike and naval stores.

Art. 10.—The two high contracting parties reciprocally engage to procure for each other, at a peace, every advantage and suitable indemnification: and his Britannic majesty particularly promises to his Sicilian majesty to take on that occasion a special care of the interests and of the security of the crown of the Two Sicilies, as well as of the tranquillity and welfare of Italy.

Art. 11,—If in hatred to the present treaty of alliance, any power whatsoever should declare war against one or other of the two high contracting parties, they mutually engage to make common cause against such power, under the same conditions and reciprocal engagements as are contained in the articles of the present treaty.

Art. 12.—The two contracting parties reserve to themselves the power of concerting with each other, after a common peace, the means of giving to the present alliance between the two powers, a greater extent, and of agreeing upon such articles and arrangements as may ensure in future the tranquillity and defence of their subjects and dominions, as well as of settling the mutual succours to be furnished by the two powers with a view to obtain that salutary end. Animated by the same zeal for the prosperity of their people, they will likewise concert upon such articles as may serve as a basis for a treaty of commerce equally useful to the subjects of both countries.

Art. 13.—The present treaty of alliance shall be ratified by the high contracting parties, and the ratifications thereof shall be exchanged in due form at Naples in the space of three months, or sooner if it can be done, to be computed from the day of the signature of the present act.

In witness whereof, we the under-signed furnished with full powers by our respective sovereigns have signed the present treaty of alliance, and have affixed thereto the seal of our arms. Done at Naples, the 1st of December 1798.

(L. S.) WILLIAM HAMILTON.
(L. S.) MARTINI MASTRIKI, MARQUIS DE GALLO.

Vote of Thanks to Sir Ralph Abercromby, Admiral Mitchell, and Sir Sidney Smith, &c.] Sep. 26. On the motion of Mr. Secretary Dundas, the House resolved, *nem. con.*—1. "That the thanks of this House be given to lieutenant general sir Ralph Abercromby, knight of the Bath, for the distinguished gallantry and ability with which he effected his landing on the Dutch coast, and established his position in the face of a powerful enemy; and, by securing the command of the principal fort and naval arsenal of the Dutch republic, afforded to his majesty's fleet the means of rescuing from the power of the French the naval force in the Texel. 2. That the thanks of this House be given to lieut. general sir James Pulteney, baronet, major generals Francis D'Oyley, Eyre Coote, Harry Burrard, and John Moore, and to the several officers of the army under the command of lieut. general sir Ralph Abercromby, for their late gallant conduct and meritorious exertions, in effecting a landing on the Dutch coast, and establishing a position in the face of a powerful enemy, thereby securing the command of the principal fort and naval arsenal of the Dutch republic, and affording to his majesty's fleet the means of rescuing from the power of the French, the naval force in the Texel. 3. That this House doth highly approve of and acknowledge the services of the non-commissioned officers and private soldiers of the army serving under the command of lieut. general sir Ralph Abercromby, at the attack of the Helder, on the coast of Holland; and that the same be signified to them by the commanders of the several corps, who are desired to thank them for their gallant behaviour. 4. That the

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thanks of this House be given to vice admiral Andrew Mitchell, for the distinguished skill and perseverance with which in spite of great and unforeseen difficulties, he kept collected, and conducted to the coast of Holland, the numerous fleet under his command; for the zeal and readiness with which he co-operated with the land forces in their descent upon the coast of Holland; and for the promptitude and ability by which he rescued the naval force of the Dutch republic from the power of the French. 5. That the thanks of this House be given to the several captains and officers in the fleet under the command of vice admiral Mitchell, for their able support of, and co-operation with, the land forces, and for their meritorious and successful exertions in rescuing from the power of the French the naval force in the Texel. 6. That this House doth highly approve of, and acknowledge, the service of the seamen and marines on board the ships under the command of vice admiral Mitchell, in the assistance they afforded to the land forces in their descent upon the coast of Holland, and for the steadiness and zeal they manifested in pursuit of the Dutch fleet within the Zuyder Sea; and that the officers commanding the several ships do signify the same to their respective crews, and do thank them for their good behaviour."

Mr. Secretary *Dundas* said, he had now to move the thanks of the House for services performed in a different quarter by that gallant officer sir Sidney Smith. In speaking upon this subject, he really felt himself at a loss for terms to express his sentiments upon the conduct of that officer. It was impossible for a human individual to conceive a situation of more difficulty and delicacy than that in which sir S. Smith was placed: and yet, in this situation, he had brought off a very small remnant of force, not by a well-conducted retreat, but with glory, against the whole power of the French at St. John D'Acre. It was now about twelve months since the intelligence arrived of the landing of that army on the coast of Egypt, and what the general feeling in this country was upon that occasion must be fresh in every man's mind. After many difficulties, the force of the enemy was collected for the purpose of making an attack upon St. John D'Acre, garrisoned by a small number of Turks, and assisted by a handful of British troops. Nothing could exceed the importance of this contest: they had, as sir Sidney had stated, a nation for spectators, who waited the issue of the conflict, in order to determine which party they should join. He did not, in his opinion, say too much when he said, that he believed that the safety of the Turkish empire depended upon the event of that contest. He animated the Turkish forces by his conduct, and directed them with his skill. He fought at the head of a few British seamen, for more than sixty days in succession, in defending a breach against the whole French force, headed by an enterprising general. He freely confessed, that he had not got over the astonishment that he felt when he was first informed of these circumstances; he had read the dispatches again and again; he had frequently ruminated upon them, and to this moment he could scarcely conceive how human exertion could achieve what he had done. This gallant officer had in the course of his life met with many difficulties, and there was a time when some persons who did not know him talked lightly of him. To those who could talk or think so of such an officer as sir Sidney Smith, he would say nothing; he would leave them to the contempt they deserved, and to the remorse they must now feel in contemplating the character of that officer. He would not say that his actions on the coast of Egypt were unrivalled, but he would say, that there never were any in which there were displayed more heroism, more skill, and greater exertion. He then moved, and it was resolved, *nem. con.*,—1. "That the thanks of this House be given to captain sir William Sidney Smith, for the conspicuous skill and heroism by which he animated and directed the efforts of the Turkish forces, and of the small number of British officers and seamen under his command, in their long and successful defence of St. John D'Acre, on the coast of Syria, against the formidable and desperate attack of the French army under the command of general Buonaparte. 2. That the thanks of this House be given to the officers belonging to the ships under the command of captain sir W. S. Smith, for the great bravery, and unremitted exertions, which they manifested, both on shore and on board the ships, in the successful defence of Saint John D'Acre, on the coast of Syria, against the formidable and desperate attack of the Freuch army under the command of general Buona-

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parte; and that sir W. S. Smith do signify the same to them. 3. That this House doth highly approve of, and acknowledge, the services of the seamen and marines belonging to the ships under the command of captain sir W. S. Smith, in the glorious defence of Saint John D'Acre, against the formidable and desperate attack of the French army under the command of general Buonaparte; and that sir W. S. Smith do signify the same to the crews of the respective ships and do thank them for their good behaviour."

October 4, similar thanks were moved in the House of Lords, and agreed to *nem. dis.*

Militia Volunteers Bill.] Sept. 26. Mr. Secretary *Dundas* moved for leave to introduce a bill to enable his majesty to receive himself voluntary services of the militia. As to the principle of the bill, it was by no means novel, for in the course of the last session he had had occasion to state it much more at length than he should feel any necessity for doing upon the present occasion. That principle, as he had then explained it, had, in the opinion of the House, justified a measure, the tendency of which was, not to lessen the force of the country, but to employ the greater part of it, not only for home defence, but for effectual operations abroad. It had been urged, that the government of this country had been too rash in adopting a measure which would have the effect of lessening the military force of the kingdom; but he was yet to learn how it could be lessening the force of the country, to employ the greater part of it beyond the circle of the island: he considered that by so doing he was more effectually securing the safety of the island, than by suffering that force to remain inactive at home; he was yet to learn how employing our forces against an enemy's country, instead of confining them to our own, was lessening our internal security. When he introduced the former bill last session, he did not pretend to point out the particular places against which the efforts of our forces should be directed; but he had no hesitation in saying, that in case the object of the allied powers should be the deliverance of Holland, that it would be for the interest of this country to entrust, to the enterprise and good conduct of a British force, some expedition between the Texel and the Mediterranean. The object of the present bill, though it appeared to be that of decreasing the militia, as far as related to the internal defence of the country, was, in point of fact, to increase a force which might be effectually employed by his majesty, in any part where their services might be necessary in facilitating the cause in which we were engaged. He was so far from being desirous of diminishing any part of the forces of the kingdom, that his sole object was, to enable them to act in such a manner as the wisdom of his majesty's councils might suggest. There was no individual in the House, or in the country, who would wish to lessen that regard which was universally felt for the militia. It was a force which had been long established, and its utility had been long recognized by the wisdom of parliament. He meant to leave the militia force of the country equal in point of extent to what it was originally recognized by parliament. That there had existed a period in the course of the present war, when it was necessary to increase that force for the internal defence of the kingdom, he admitted. It had been thought necessary to raise that force known by the denomination of the Supplementary Militia; but then it was to be recollected, that that measure had been brought forward at a time when the forces of this country, calculated for offensive or defensive operations, were exceedingly small, compared with what they were now; that it was at a period too when the country was threatened with invasion by its old and inveterate enemies; but for some time past the necessity of so large a defensive force had been gradually wearing away; particularly by the successes of his majesty's arms by sea and land, and still more so by those meritorious exertions which the zeal and loyalty of the people of this country had produced in defence of their king, their constitution, their laws, and their religion. The force raised by that zeal and loyalty, could only be supposed to have for its more immediate object the protection and defence of the capital of the British empire. Under these circumstances, therefore, adverting to the internal safety of the country on the one hand, and to the unexampled successes obtained by his majesty's arms on the other, he should conclude with moving "That leave be given to bring in a bill, for enabling his majesty to accept the services of an additional number of Volunteers from the Militia, under certain Restrictions."

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After a short conversation, leave was given to bring in the bill. It went through its several stages without much opposition, and passed the Commons on the 2nd of October.

Protest against the Militia Volunteers Bill.] Oct. 4. The bill was read a second time, after a debate. The following Protest was entered on the Journals:

"Dissentient,

1. "Because, by this bill, and by the recited act of the last session, whose powers are by this bill aggravated and extended, the constitutional purposes of the militia establishment are totally and finally subverted.

2. "Because, all the purposes of procuring men for the army might have been easily obtained by disbanding the supplementary war militia (which by its extraordinary increase had professedly occasioned a scarcity of men) without reducing the permanent militia establishment to a service, in which no gentleman could hereafter hope that his patriotic and disinterested industry would enable him to form his county regiment to a continued state of discipline, at the head of which he might, with credit and honour to himself, answer the purpose of its institution in the defence of his country against invasion.

3. "Because, by this measure, all that system and arrangement which nourished the zeal of independent country gentlemen is irrecoverably done away in the existing pressure of a formidable and alarming war, and the peace establishment of the militia (if, mangled as it is by this bill, it can survive the war) will necessarily be reduced to a mere standing army of the worst sort; independent of an annual vote of parliament; deprived of all its former constitutional advantages; connected with the people by nothing but the unequal and oppressive burthens it imposes on them; and commanded by such persons as may be procured to be regulating officers to a mere drill of army recruits.

4. "Because the landed interest of England and Wales, already so heavily burthened, is most materially affected by this total revolution in the militia system; inasmuch as the peculiar expenses of a militia originally formed for our unalienable domestic defence and insular garrison, are unjustly continued on the oppressed owners and occupiers of land in England and Wales, when they are by this measure deprived of the advantages which they had purchased, namely, those of security, resulting from a permanent domestic protection for their wives and children, which, under the faith of parliament, was held out to them as the valuable consideration for heavy taxes imposed solely on them.

5. "Because this bill operates with most unjustifiable partiality: it does not fairly and equally extend to Scotland; Scotland is still protected in the enjoyment of a constitutional militia; neither reduced to the disgraceful condition of a drill for the army, nor liable to be employed in the defence of England; from its services (confined and limited solely to the boundaries of Scotland) England and Wales can derive no protection, while the reduced remnants of the militia of England and Wales may be removed from the defence of their own homes to that of the most remote parts of Scotland.

(Signed) "CARNARVON
"WENTWORTH FITZWILLIAM
"All but the second reason,
"BUCKINGHAMSHIRE."

Thanks of the House of Lords to the Earl of Mornington, Lord Clive, General Harris, &c.] Oct. 4. Lord *Grenville* rose to make his promised motion. The task he had undertaken to perform was as arduous as it was satisfactory, and he had only to lament his inability to do any thing like justice to the claims of superior merit and unrivalled services, which he had that day to recommend to the attention of their lordships, and to the gratitude of the nation at large. In his endeavours to discharge the duty he had imposed upon himself, he would begin by tracing the origin and progress of a war, which had been embarked in after repeated attempts at amicable negotiation had proved unavailing, and which terminated in the annihilation of a power that had perfidiously planned every measure of hostility against the British interests in India, of which it had meditated the extinction, by combining with our most powerful and inveterate foe to effect our total expulsion from that country. It was also his task to call their lordships attention to the merits of those by whose vigilance these mischiefs were averted, and by whose courage and energy the most glorious triumphs were achieved. He was thoroughly sensible how inade-

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quate he was to the performance of such a task, and how short every the most forcible expression must fall of the public merits and services which distinguished the exertions of those to whom he intended to move the thanks of their lordships. Nor did he imagine that the great degree of intimacy and friendship in which, without interruption, he had passed his life with the present governor general of Bengal, could in the least tend to weaken the faint tribute of praise which he was anxious to pay to his signal deserts. In attempting the panegyric of that noble lord, he obeyed the call of his public duty, and of the gratitude of the public, full as much as he did any private propensity; for the highest strain of eulogy in which he could indulge would inadequately represent the talents and virtues which he had so long loved and admired. They happily, however, spoke loudly for themselves, in actions, the result of which had proved so glorious to the country. A detail of those actions might be deemed necessary to show the extent and solidity of these services, and the wisdom and honour of those by whom they were performed. On his arrival in India, lord Mornington found the princes of the country at peace with our India company; but that peace was not of long duration. Their lordships were well acquainted with the great efforts that had been made by France to fit out the formidable expedition which sailed from Toulon; nor was any man here ignorant of its destination; it meditated destruction to the British empire in India, which France aimed at effecting by gaining over some of the native powers. Tippoo Sultaun was the first and the most eager to go every length to derive advantage from that expedition, and to lend it every assistance in his power. For this purpose he sent an embassy to the Isle of France, not with a view to complain of any grievance, or to solicit any redress, but to encourage the attempts of the French, and embark himself in the design, for our utter expulsion from our India possessions —such was his perfidious conduct towards those from whom he had experienced the utmost forbearance, the most unparalleled magnanimity. The motives of this embassy Tippoo did not endeavour to conceal. They were avowedly an attachment to the cause of the French republic, and hostility to the interests of England. His letters, addressed not only to the government of the Isle of France, but to the Executive Directory of France, openly invited them to conclude an offensive and defensive alliance with him, and offered to subsidize whatever troops France might furnish him with, to enable him to commence hostilities against the British forces. The first notice which lord Mornington received of this proposed alliance, was in June 1798, and coupling it with the information he had likewise received of the naval expedition which sailed from Toulon, he took every measure which prudence could suggest, and activity and decision could enforce. On the 18th June, 1798, the governor-general received an authentic account of the proclamation that had been issued in the Isle of France, and of the design which that proclamation unfolded. He then formed the resolution, not to wait, but to anticipate the attack of the enemy. He accordingly dispatched orders to the governors of Madras and Bombay, to prepare for the event; and so forward were the preparations, that a decisive blow was struck even that year. Great doubts and difficulties, however, arose in assembling the army at Madras, and it was much feared that long before it was in readiness to act, Tippoo's alarms might be excited, which would defeat the measures which the governor-general was concerting. No situation could be more critical, or more full of perplexing anxiety, than that in which lord Mornington was then placed—to await the danger with his eyes open to its approach, would be a flagrant neglect of his duty, to attempt to avert it by a sudden and abrupt attack, seemed to the most experienced military men a measure of very hazardous issue; such was the trying dilemma in which the governor-general was entangled, and whatever side he embraced he felt that he must incur the whole of the responsibility. The co-operation he was to expect from the native powers in alliance with Great Britain, was either doubtful or of little advantage. The Mahrattas were rendered unable to afford any substantial assistance; nor was their good-will to be called in question. The absence of their support arose from real inability. From the co-operation of the Nizam, little or nothing could be expected; his councils and army were at that period under the influence of a French faction, and two French officers were at the head of the sepoys in the nizam's service, and indeed the whole of his military force was at the disposal of

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the French officers. These difficulties created neither despondency nor fear in the heart of the governor-general: he, on the contrary, adopted the most spirited and decisive measures; an armed force was immediately detached into the territories of the nizam; the French army was not only surrounded and made prisoners; but a new treaty was concluded with the nizam, by which the disposal of his forces were put into the hands of the British, and that very army which had been destined to attack them, was immediately turned against the enemy. What could display greater ability than this masterly manœuvre? But if it was great in ability, how much more useful was it in its consequences, which so powerfully contributed to our subsequent successes, by placing us in a situation to frustrate all the plans that had been meditated against us. Till that was accomplished, nothing was safe: but as soon as it was achieved a negotiation was opened. Lord Mornington was not unmindful that it was the best policy to remain contented with our situation in India; to offend no power by our encroachments, or give umbrage to them by any plan of ambition or aggrandizement; but faithfully and punctually to observe the faith of existing treaties. Such, indeed, was the nature and tendency of the orders under which, as governor-general, he was bound to act. He had, however, ample justification for pursuing an opposite plan; for what more clear and undisguised hostility could there be, than that which he experienced from those who would negociate with our worst enemy for our ruin, and enter into offensive alliance with him for our destruction; who stood forward in military array against our troops; and who assumed, if not the measures of actual hostility, at least the attitude of hostile preparation and menace; who proposed to France that if she would succour them with a military force from Europe, they would favour their landing at Porto-novo; that they would lead them into the heart of the Dutch territories, into which they were ready to penetrate themselves, and co-operate with the French arms in expelling us from our dominion in India? Nor was it against the British establishments alone that they concerted this hostile attack, but also against those of Portugal, on account of her alliance with Great Britain. In the storming of that capital, where these machinations were hatched, and in the fall of that power who acted such a perfidious part against us, not only therefore great military skill and talent have been displayed, but the most consummate wisdom and firmness. With this crafty and perfidious power lord Mornington had, however, proposed to open a negotiation, even when Tippoo was doing all the mischief in his power, without uttering one word of grievance or complaint. Notwithstanding his flagrant violations of all faith towards the English government, lord Mornington renewed his offers to remove every cause of disaffection, if any really existed. The whole of these pacific offers were received either with sullen silence or studied duplicity, and at last with open preparations of hostile aggression. When Tippoo saw the ruin he was drawing down upon his own head, his inveterate animosity suggested to his wicked imagination that he already saw the gigantic plan of the French republic on the eve of being realized, and that the hour was come for the downfal of the British dominions in India. He was also anxious to gain time, and defer the measures that were taking against him, in order that the season of the year might intervene, and allow time to receive the succours with which he was to co-operate in our overthrow.—But was it not unnecessary to dwell any longer on these details; or on the wisdom, firmness, and sound policy of the measures adopted by the governor-general, who, month after month, had made proposals for negotiation to an enemy, who instead of a sincere desire to establish peace, was secretly endeavouring to destroy us? And if after these repeated provocations, his noble friend had resolved upon offensive operations, it was easy to relieve the governor-general from all responsibility for his conduct, a conduct which, when rightly appreciated, would be discovered not only to have averted the formidable perils which hung over our Indian empire, but to have established it on a basis of more permanent security than it ever before enjoyed. There was one point more, to which he would advert, and that was the judicious manner in which the governor-general had proceeded to compose and reconcile all the discordant opinions which formerly prevailed among the servants of the India company. In this he had succeeded by a wise and temperate use of the sole controlling power with which he was invested; and a greater and more refined satisfac-

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tion arose in his breast from observing this salutary effect, when he perceived that this discord of sentiment was silenced, not merely by the interposition of this superior control, but by an appeal to the wisdom and good sense of the different governors. Among them the conduct of lord Clive stood peculiarly eminent, and reflected the greatest honour on his heart and head. That noble lord, spurning all little jealousies had not only expressed a decided opinion, in favour of the propriety of the measures pursued by the governor-general, but by his zeal and spirit had principally contributed to secure the benefits, which the adoption of these measures had in contemplation. The same spirit animated the exertions of the governor of Bombay, Mr. Duncan. In consequence of these spirited, and well-concerted measures, when the army was put in motion, it evidently appeared to be composed of troops the best disciplined and appointed of any that were ever collected in India. The event, indeed, best showed the zeal and spirit, the courage and intrepidity with which it glowed, and by which all its movements were directed. It was not his intention to detail its different operations, or the successes with which they were crowned. He could not, however, forbear mentioning the gallant action of the 6th of March, when a small division of the British army attacked and defeated a numerous force of the enemy, and by that victory laid the ground of the subsequent successful actions, which were closed by that brilliant event which was brought about by an army composed almost entirely of Europeans, who during the intense heat of the day, attacked and took by assault one of the strongest fortresses, and in the space of two hours made themselves masters of the capital of the most implacable and perfidious foe, whom the British interests had to dread in India. These were achievements which soared above all praise; he would not, therefore, attempt a word more in their commendation. His lordship then concluded by moving, "That the Thanks of this House be given to the right hon. Richard lord Wellesley, earl of Mornington in the kingdom of Ireland, and governor-general of the British possessions in the East Indies, for the wisdom, decision, and energy, with which he discharged the arduous duties of his station, from the time of his taking upon him the said government to the glorious termination of the late war by the capture of Seringapatam; during which period, by opposing to the perfidy of the late Sultaun of Mysore a uniform moderation, dignity, and firmness, and by counteracting with equal promptitude and ability the dangerous intrigues and projects of the French, particularly by destroying their power and influence in the deccan, he prepared the way for the rapid and brilliant operations carried on under his superintendance and direction, the result of which has finally disappointed all the designs of our enemies in that quarter, and has established, on a basis of permanent security, the tranquillity and prosperity of the British empire in India. 2. That the Thanks of this House be given to the right hon. lord Clive, governor of the settlement of Fort St. George, for his zealous, cordial, and honourable concurrence, in forwarding the wise and dignified views of the governor-general in council, by which he has furnished a salutary and memorable example of the advantage of unanimity and concord among the persons employed in high stations in the British dominions in the East Indies, and has, to the utmost of his power, promoted the success of those measures, from which the most important public benefits have resulted to this country. 3. That the Thanks of this House be given to Jonathan Duncan, esq. governor of Bombay for the zeal and promptitude of his conduct in preparing the army of that presidency for the field, agreeably to the orders of the governor-general in council, whereby that army was enabled materially to contribute to the successful and glorious termination of the late war in India. 4. "That the Thanks of this House be given to lieutenant general George Harris, for the whole of his able and meritorious conduct in the command of the forces of his majesty and of the East India company, during the late glorious and decisive war with the Sultaun of Mysore, and particularly for the ability, judgment, and energy with which he planned and directed the assault of Seringapatam, the success of which brilliant achievement has so highly contributed to the glory of the British name, and to the permanent tranquillity of our possessions in the East. 5. That the Thanks of this House be given to lieutenant-general James Stuart, commander in chief of the Bombay army, which so gloriously co-operated in the success of the late campaign in India;

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and also, to major generals John Floyd, Thomas Bridges, William Popham, James Hartley, and David Baird, and to the respective officers of the armies employed on that occasion against the enemy, for their distinguished and meritorious services. 6. That this House doth highly approve of, and acknowledge, the services of the non-commissioned officers and private soldiers employed against the enemy in the late glorious and decisive war in the East Indies; and that the same be signified to them by the commanders of the several corps, who are desired to thank them for their gallant behaviour."

The several Resolutions were agreed to *nem. dis.*

Similar resolutions were this day moved in the Commons by Mr. Secretary Dundas, and agreed to *nem. con.*

Lord Holland's Motion for an Address respecting the Treaties with Russia.] Oct. 11. Lord *Holland* went into an able examination of the Treaties with Russia, (See p. 1168) and concluded with moving,

"That an humble Address be presented to his majesty, to return our most humble thanks for the gracious communication of the two treaties, which his majesty, by the advice of his ministers, has been pleased to enter into with his majesty the emperor of all the Russias. To express our sincere satisfaction at perceiving that his majesty has entered into no engagement with the powers at war with France, which can lead to an interference with the internal affairs of that country, or preclude the conclusion of peace upon just and equitable terms with the French republic. That though considering the unparalleled sacrifices which his majesty's faithful subjects have already made, and that we are now engaged in the seventh year of an expensive and destructive war, from the calamities of which Russia has been hitherto exempt, we might have expected a more gratuitous exertion of the force of that powerful empire in the common cause; we shall nevertheless not fail to concur in such measures as the wisdom of parliament may suggest for the purpose of meeting the additional and heavy expenses which his majesty's engagements with the emperor of all the Russias will necessarily occasion. To assure his majesty that our anxious desire to maintain his majesty's personal honour inviolate, will induce us also to concur in a legislative provision, to enable his majesty to fulfil the seventh article of the treaty of the 22nd of June 1799, which engages for the maintenance of a body of Russian troops within these kingdoms, upon certain contingencies; but at the same time humbly to represent to his majesty, that we have seen the stipulation above alluded to with the most serious concern and anxiety, as from the unprecedented manner in which it has been concluded, and in which it has been communicated to this House, there is too much reason to fear that those persons who have advised his majesty to this measure, and whose conduct, in this instance, we cannot too severely condemn, entertain an opinion that a power is vested in the crown of introducing and maintaining within these kingdoms a foreign force, without the consent or sanction of parliament, and that we therefore feel ourselves particularly called upon to guard against the establishment of such a power, which is totally inconsistent with the ancient laws of this realm, and with the security of those indubitable rights which our ancestors asserted at the Revolution, and which we are determined to maintain. Farther to express to his majesty, that in cheerfully adopting such measures as may be necessary for a vigorous prosecution of the war, we entertain a confident expectation that his majesty will faithfully adhere to the pledge which he has so solemnly given to this country, and to Europe, in his declaration of the 28th of October 1797, and humbly to suggest to his majesty, that the present moment seems peculiarly favourable to the adoption of moderate and pacific counsels, when the improved situation of affairs, and the successes of his majesty and his allies, will give an additional grace and dignity to measures of a conciliatory nature, and when the joint weight of the allies, sincerely exerted in a fair and honourable negociation for peace, may be expected to produce the happiest effects. That it is far from the wish or intention of this House to reflect upon any of his majesty's allies, or to excite suspicions injurious to that sincere and cordial co-operation, which is no less essential to a successful prosecution of the war than to an effective negotiation for peace. But we cannot conceal from ourselves, nor will we, by any ill-timed flattery, dissemble from his majesty the dangers which may result from not endeavouring

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in time to set on foot a joint negotiation for peace, whilst the confederacy against France yet remains unbroken. The former events of the present war sufficiently prove, that Great Britain may be left alone to support the whole burthen of the contest, against a formidable and irritated enemy, notwithstanding the sacrifices she had made for the common interest, and in defiance of the most solemn engagements, not to conclude a peace but by common consent. We have not learnt that such treaties at present exist with all the powers now engaged in the war, nor have we seen such decisive and unequivocal symptoms of a perfect union and concert in their views and objects as to silence the apprehensions which we feel it our duty to state to his majesty, that by new concessions, which France has such abundant means of making, without any diminution of her incorporated territory, some of the members of the confederacy may be separated from the common cause, and Great Britain again lose the inestimable advantages which now offer of opening a negociation for peace, supported by the whole weight, authority, and power of her present allies. That whilst we are aware that it is neither practicable nor prudent to define the precise terms and conditions upon which peace must ultimately be concluded, which we are sensible must alter with the circumstances of the war, and the different degrees of security which different situations and the various interests of the powers engaged may require, we conceive nevertheless that it is not only perfectly practicable and safe, but that at this moment it would be attended with important advantages to state what are now the principles which, with the consent and concurrence of his allies, his majesty would be willing to adopt as the basis of immediate negotiation: at least, we cannot forbear most earnestly to entreat his majesty to disclaim such views as must render peace with the republic of France utterly unattainable; and the suspicion of which cannot fail to unite the people of that country in a furious zeal and hatred against the British nation, as being engaged in the unjustifiable project of imposing upon them a government by force, or of dismembering their ancient empire. Recurring, therefore, to his majesty's royal declaration of 1797, we humbly beseech his majesty to reject all such counsels as would lead him to depart from the principles of moderation therein expressed, persuaded, that some unequivocal proof of a sincere desire for the re-establishment of peace, on just and reasonable grounds, would afford the best hope of producing a correspondent disposition in the enemy, or, if contrary to that just expectation, from ambition, from pride, or from a spirit of revenge, such honourable overtures as his majesty might be advised to make should be rejected, that it would produce the double advantage of destroying the confidence of the people of France in their present rulers, and of increasing the zeal, energy, and spirit of all descriptions of his majesty's faithful subjects, in the necessary prosecution of just and unavoidable hostilities."

The Treaties were briefly defended by lord Grenville, who gave his decided negative to the motion. After which, the House divided: Contents, 2; Not-contents 15.

On the 12th of October, both Houses adjourned to the 21st of January 1800.

The King's Message respecting Overtures of Peace from the Consular Government of France.] January 22, 1800. Mr. Pitt presented the following Message from his Majesty:

"GEORGE *R.*

"The Supplies granted in the commencement of the present session having been calculated to provide only for the first months of the year, his majesty now recommends it to the House of Commons, to make such farther provision as they may judge necessary, under the present circumstances, for the several branches of the public service, and for the vigorous prosecution of the war; and his majesty has given directions that the proper estimates for this purpose should be laid before the House.

"His majesty has thought proper on this occasion to direct that there should be laid before the House, copies of Communications recently received from the enemy, and of the Answers which have been returned thereto, by his majesty's command.

"His majesty entertains the fullest confidence that those Answers will appear to this House to have been conformable to that line of conduct which was required from his majesty on this occasion, by his regard to all the most important interests of his dominions. And his majesty, having no object more at heart than

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that of contributing, as soon as the situation of affairs shall render it practicable, to the re-establishment of the general tranquillity of Europe, on a sure and solid foundation, and of providing effectually for the security and permanent prosperity of his faithful people, places a firm reliance on the continued support of his parliament, and on the zeal and perseverance of his subjects, in such measures as may best tend to confirm the signal advantages which have been obtained, to the common cause, in the course of the last campaign, and to conduct the great contest, in which his majesty is engaged, to a safe and honourable conclusion.

"G. R."

Papers relating to the Overture of Peace from the Consular Government of France.] The following Papers were laid before both Houses, by his majesty's command:

TRANSLATION of a Letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs in France to Lord Grenville, dated 25th December 1799.

My lord;—I dispatch, by order of general Buonaparté, First Consul of the French republic, a messenger to London; he is the bearer of a letter from the first consul of the republic, to his majesty the king of England. —I request you to give the necessary orders that he may be enabled to deliver it directly into your own hands.—This step, in itself, announces the importance of its object. Accept, my lord, the assurance, &c.

(Signed) CH. MAU. TALLEYRAND.

Paris, 5th Nivose,
8th year of the French Republic
(December 25th, 1799).

TRANSLATION of a Letter from General Buonaparté, dated Paris, 25th December 1799.

French Republic.—Sovereignty of the People.—Liberty, Equality.

Buonaparté, First Consul of the Republic, to his Majesty the King of Great Britain and Ireland, Paris, the 5th Nivose, 8th year of the Republic (December 25th, 1799).

Called by the wishes of the French nation to occupy the first magistracy of the republic, I think it proper, on entering into office, to make a direct communication of it to your majesty.

The war which, for eight years, has ravaged the four quarters of the world, must it be eternal? Are there no means of coming to an understanding?

How can the two most enlightened nations of Europe, powerful and strong beyond what their safety and independence require, sacrifice to ideas of vain greatness, the benefits of commerce, internal prosperity, and the happiness of families? How is it that they do not feel that peace is of the first necessity, as well as of the first glory?

These sentiments cannot be foreign to the heart of your majesty, who reigns over a free nation, and with the sole view of rendering it happy.

Your majesty will only see in this overture my sincere desire to contribute efficaciously, for the second time, to a general pacification, by a step speedy, entirely of confidence, and disengaged from those forms which, necessary perhaps to disguise the dependence of weak states, prove only, in those which are strong, the mutual desire of deceiving each other.

France and England, by the abuse of their strength, may still for a long time, for the misfortune of all nations, retard the period of their being exhausted.—But I will venture to say it, the fate of all civilized nations is attached to the termination of a war, which involves the whole world. Of your majesty.

(Signed) BUONAPARTE.

LETTER from Lord Grenville to the Minister of Foreign Affairs at Paris, dated Downing-street, January 4th, 1800.

Sir;—I have received, and laid before the king, the two letters which you have transmitted to me, and his majesty seeing no reason to depart from those forms which have long been established in Europe for transacting business with foreign states, has commanded me, to return, in his name, the official answer which I send you herewith enclosed. I have the honour to be, with high consideration, &c.

(Signed) GRENVILLE.

OFFICIAL NOTE from Lord Grenville to the Minister for Foreign Affairs at Paris, dated Downing-street, January 4th, 1800.

The King has given frequent proofs of his sincere desire for the re-establishment of secure and permanent tranquillity in Europe. He neither is, nor has been, engaged in any contest for a vain and false glory. He has had no other view than that of maintaining against all aggression the rights and happiness of his subjects.

For these he has contended against an unprovoked attack, and for the same objects he is still obliged to contend; nor can he hope that this necessity could be removed by entering, at the present moment, into a negotiation with those whom a fresh revolution has so recently placed in the exercise of power in France, since no real advantage can arise from such negotiation to the great and desirable object of general peace, until it shall distinctly appear that those causes have ceased to operate, which originally produced the war, and by which it has since been protracted, and, in more than one instance, renewed.

The same system, to the prevalence of which France justly ascribes all her present

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miseries, is that which has also involved the rest of Europe in a long and destructive warfare, of a nature long since unknown to the practice of civilized nations.

For the extension of this system, and for the extermination of all established governments, the resources of France have, from year to year, and in the midst of the most unparalleled distress, been lavished and exhausted. To this indiscriminate spirit of destruction, the Netherlands, the United Provinces, the Swiss Cantons (his majesty's ancient friends and allies) have successively been sacrificed. Germany has been ravaged. Italy, though now rescued from its invaders, has been made the scene of unbounded rapine and anarchy. His majesty has himself been compelled to maintain an arduous and burthensome contest, for the independence and existence of his kingdoms.

Nor have these calamities been confined to Europe alone: they have been extended to the most distant quarters of the world, and even to countries so remote, both in situation and interest, from the present contest, that the very existence of such a war was, perhaps, unknown to those who found themselves suddenly involved in all its horrors.

While such a system continues to prevail, and while the blood and treasure of a numerous and powerful nation can be lavished in its support, experience has shown that no defence but that of open and steady hostility can be availing. The most solemn treaties have only prepared the way for fresh aggression; and it is to a determined resistance alone, that is now due whatever remains in Europe of stability for property, for personal liberty, for social order, or for the free exercise of religion.

For the security, therefore, of these essential objects, his majesty cannot place his reliance on the mere renewal of general professions of pacific dispositions. Such professions have been repeatedly held out by all those who have successively directed the resources of France to the destruction of Europe; and whom the present rulers have declared to have been all, from the beginning, and uniformly, incapable of maintaining the relations of amity and peace.

Greatly, indeed, will his majesty rejoice, whenever it shall appear that the danger to which his own dominions and those of his allies, have been so long exposed, has really ceased; whenever he shall be satisfied that the necessity of resistance is at an end; that after the experience of so many years of crimes and miseries, better principles have ultimately prevailed in France; and that all the gigantic projects of ambition, and all the restless schemes of destruction, which have endangered the very existence of civil society, have at length been finally relinquished: But the conviction of such a change, however agreeable to his majesty's wishes, can result only from experience, and the evidence of facts.

The best and most natural pledge of its reality and permanence, would be the restoration of that line of princes which for so many centuries maintained the French nation in prosperity at home, and in consideration and respect abroad: Such an event would at once have removed, and will at any time remove, all obstacles in the way of negotiation or peace. It would confirm to France the unmolested enjoyment of its ancient territory; and it would give to all the other nations of Europe, in tranquillity and peace, that security which they are now compelled to seek by other means.

But, desirable as such an event must be, both to France and to the world, it is not to this mode exclusively that his majesty limits the possibility of secure and solid pacification. His majesty makes no claim to prescribe to France what shall be the form of her government, or in whose hands she shall vest the authority necessary for conducting the affairs of a great and powerful nation.

His majesty looks only to the security of his own dominions, and those of his allies, and to the general safety of Europe. Whenever he shall judge that such security can in any manner be attained, as resulting either from the internal situation of that country, from whose internal situation the danger has arisen, or from such other circumstances of whatever nature as may produce the same end, his majesty will eagerly embrace the opportunity to concert with his allies the means of immediate and general pacification.

Unhappily no such security hitherto exists: No sufficient evidence of the principles by which the new government will be directed; no reasonable ground by which to judge of its stability. In this situation it can for the present only remain for his majesty to pursue, in conjunction with other powers, those exertions of just and defensive war, which his regard to the happiness of his subjects will never permit him, either to continue beyond the necessity in which they originated, or to terminate on any other grounds, than such as may best contribute to the secure enjoyment of their tranquillity, their constitution, and their independence.

(Signed) GRENVILLE.

TRANSLATION of a Letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs, at Paris, to Lord Grenville: dated Paris, 24th Nivose (14th January 1800).

My lord;—I lost no time in laying before the first consul of the republic, the official note under date of the 14th Nivose, which you transmitted to me; and I am charged to forward the answer (equally official) which you will find annexed. Receive, my lord, the assurance, &c.

(Signed) CH. MAU. TALLEYRAND.

TRANSLATION of the Official Note from the Minister for Foreign Affairs, at Paris, to

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Lord Grenville, dated 24th Nivose (January 14th, 1800).

The official note, under date of the 14th Nivose, the eighth year, addressed by the minister of his Britannic majesty, having been laid before the first consul of the French republic, he observed with surprise, that it rested upon an opinion which is not exact, respecting the origin and consequences of the present war. Very far from its being France which provoked it, she had, it must be remembered, from the commencement of her revolution, solemnly proclaimed her love of peace, her disinclination to conquests, her respect for the independence of all governments, and it is not to be doubted, that, occupied at that time, and entirely with her own internal affairs, she would have avoided taking part in those of Europe, and would have remained faithful to her declarations.

But, from an opposite disposition, as soon as the French revolution had broken out, almost all Europe entered into a league for its destruction. The aggression was real, long time before it was public; internal resistance was excited, its opponents were favourably received, their extravagant declamations were supported, the French nation was insulted in the person of its agents, and England set particularly this example, by the dismissal of the minister accredited to her; finally, France was, in fact, attacked in her independence in her honour, and in her safety, long time before the war was declared.

Thus it is to the projects of subjection, dissolution, and dismemberment, which were prepared against her, and the execution of which was several times attempted and pursued, that France has a right to impute the evils which she has suffered, and those which have afflicted Europe. Such projects for a long time, without example with respect to so powerful a nation, could not fail to bring on the most fatal consequences. Assailed on all sides, the republic could not but extend universally the efforts of her defence; and it is only for the maintenance of her own independence, that she has made use of those means which she possessed in her own strength, and the courage of her citizens. As long as she saw that her enemies obstinately refused to recognize her rights, she counted only upon the energy of her resistance; but as soon as they were obliged to abandon the hope of invasion, she sought for means of conciliation, and manifested pacific intentions; and if these have not always been efficacious, if, in the midst of the critical circumstances of her internal situation, which the revolution and the war have successively brought on, the former depositaries of the executive authority in France have not always shown as much moderation as the nation itself has shown courage, it must, above all, be imputed to the fatal and persevering animosity with which the resources of England have been lavished to accomplish the ruin of France.

But, if the wishes of his Britannic majesty (in conformity with his assurances) are in unison with those of the French republic, for the re-establishment of peace, why, instead of attempting the apology of the war, should not attention be rather paid to the means of terminating it? And what obstacle can prevent a mutual understanding, of which the utility is reciprocal, and is felt; especially when the first consul of the French republic has personally given so many proofs of his eagerness to put an end to the calamities of war, and of his disposition to maintain the rigid observance of all treaties concluded.

The first consul of the French republic would not doubt that his Britannic majesty recognized the right of nations to choose the form of their government, since it is from the exercise of this right that he holds his crown; but he has been unable to comprehend how to this fundamental principle, upon which rests the existence of political societies, the minister of his Britannic majesty could annex insinuations which tend to an interference in the internal affairs of the republic, and which are not less injurious to the French nation, and to its government, than it would be to England and to his majesty, if a sort of invitation were held out in favour of that republican government, of which England adopted the forms in the middle of the last century, or an exhortation to recall to the throne that family whom their birth had placed there, and whom a revolution compelled to descend from it.

If, at periods not far distant, and when the constitutional system of the republic presented neither the strength nor the solidity which it contains at present, his Britannic majesty thought himself enabled to invite a negotiation and pacific conferences, how is it possible that he should not be eager to renew negotiations to which the present and reciprocal situation of affairs promises a rapid progress. On every side, the voice of nations and of humanity implores the conclusion of a war, marked already by such great calamities, and the prolongation of which threatens Europe an universal convulsion, and irremediable evils. It is, therefore, to put a stop to the course of these calamities, or in order that their terrible consequences may be reproached to those only who shall have provoked them, that the first consul of the French republic proposes to put an immediate end to hostilities, by agreeing to a suspension of arms, and naming plenipotentiaries on each side, who should repair to Dunkirk, or any other town, as advantageously situated for the quickness of the respective communications, and who should apply themselves, without any delay, to effect the re-establishment of peace and good understanding between the French republic and England. The first consul offers to give the passports which may be necessary for this purpose.

(Signed) Ch. Mau. Talleyrand.

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LETTER from Lord Grenville to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, at Paris, dated Downing-street, January 20th, 1800.

Sir;—I have the honour to inclose to you the answer which his majesty has directed me to return to the official note which you transmitted to me. I have, &c. GRENVILLE.

OFFICIAL NOTE from Lord Grenville to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, at Paris, dated January 20th, 1800.

The official note transmitted by the minister for foreign affairs in France, and received by the undersigned on the 18th instant, has been laid before the king.

His majesty cannot forbear expressing the concern with which he observes in that note that the unprovoked aggressions of France, the sole cause and origin of the war, are systematically defended by her present rulers, under the same injurious pretences by which they were originally attempted to be disguised. His majesty will not enter into the refutation of allegations now universally exploded, and (in so far as they respect his majesty's conduct) not only in themselves utterly groundless, but contradicted both by the internal evidence of the transactions to which they relate, and also by the express testimony (given at the time) of the government of France itself.

With respect to the object of the note, his majesty can only refer to the answer which he has already given.

He has explained without reserve, the obstacles which in his judgment preclude, at the present moment, all hope of advantage from negotiation. All the inducements to treat which are relied upon in the French official note; the personal dispositions which are said to prevail for the conclusion of peace, and for the future observance of treaties; the power of insuring the effect of those dispositions, supposing them to exist; and the solidity and consistency of the system newly established after so rapid a succession of revolutions:—All these are points which can be known only from that test to which his majesty has already referred them; the result of experience, and the evidence of facts.

With that sincerity and plainness which his anxiety for the re-establishment of peace indispensably required, his majesty has pointed out to France the surest and speediest means for the attainment of that great object. But he has declared, in terms equally explicit, and with the same sincerity, that he entertains no desire to prescribe to a foreign nation the form of its government; that he looks only to the security of his own dominions, and of Europe; and that, whenever that essential object can, in his judgment, be in any manner whatever sufficiently provided for, he will eagerly concert with his allies the means of immediate and joint negotiation for the re-establishment of general tranquillity.

To these declarations his majesty steadily adheres; and it is only on the grounds thus stated, that his regard to the safety of his subjects will suffer him to renounce that system of vigorous defence, to which under the favour of Providence, his kingdoms owe the security of those blessings which they now enjoy. GRENVILLE.

The King's Message respecting the Stationing of Russian Troops.] Mr. *Pitt* presented a second Message from his Majesty. It was as follows:

"GEORGE *R.*

"His Majesty thinks proper to acquaint the House of Commons, that a body of auxiliary Russian troops, employed with his majesty's forces in the expedition to Holland, having necessarily been brought to these kingdoms at the close of the campaign, and the season of the year and other circumstances, not having admitted of their being sent back to the dominions of the emperor of Russia, his majesty has taken measures agreeably to treaty, for their being stationed during the winter in his majesty's dominions; and that his majesty has accordingly directed proper accommodations to be provided for them in the islands of Guernsey and Jersey.

"G. *R.*"

Debate in the Lords on the King's Message respecting an Overture of Peace from the Consular Government of France.] January 28. The order of the day being read, for taking the King's Message, and also the several Papers therein mentioned, into consideration,

Lord *Grenville* observed, that the question which noble lords were then summoned to consider was one of the most momentous that ever came under the deliberation of parliament. No comments of his could be wanting, therefore, to heighten the interest of that discussion which would necessarily arise from it. So much was already known to the House concerning the present state of this country and of Europe, and such had been the declarations from time to time of those of their lordships, who, with him, saw the necessity and justice of the war in which we were engaged, that for him to detain their lordships that evening to any great length, by stating arguments to support the motion he should have the honour to propose, would be to arraign the justice of those declarations, and to appear to doubt the policy of those determinations which resulted from them. Their lordships had, in their repeated ad-

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dresses, laid at the foot of the throne the demonstrations of their perfect acquiescence in the propriety of those measures which the servants of the crown had thought it most consistent with the real interests of the country, to recommend and adopt. Unfortunately, the same necessity still existed for persevering in the contest. Nothing in the state and posture of the affairs of Europe admitted of a rational hope that for this country, or for Europe there was any security but in war. It was not possible to have made the study of the present condition of the world a principal care, without perceiving that a hostile mind still pervaded the whole conduct of the enemy. From the documents on their lordships table, it was obvious, that the same proneness to aggression, the same disregard to justice, still actuated the conduct of the men who rule in France. Under such circumstances, there could be no security for Europe in peace. Peace with a nation whose war was made against all order, all religion, all morality, would be rather a cessation of resistance to wrong, than a suspension of arms in the nature of ordinary warfare. Hence it was incumbent to persevere with increased vigour in the contest. It was incumbent on their lordships to renew that night the pledge of their support of his majesty's crown, and of the dearest and best interests of Englishmen. No man could read the papers on the table, coupled with the real conduct and apparent views of France, without feeling that it was in war, that the great civil community of Europe were to find security. There was then no course for the House to take, but to support his majesty in the prosecution of those measures of just defence which the nature of our situation required. But though he could see no wise course to pursue, but war, he nevertheless felt that peace might be, would indeed be, a blessing. To negotiate with established governments, was formerly not merely easy, but under most circumstances safe;—to negotiate with the go-government of France now, would be to incur all the risks of an uncertain truce, without attaining the benefits even of a temporary peace. Yet; were it not in contradiction to all experience, to believe, that a peace with that republic is attainable and safe, so much did he lament the miseries of war, that he would try negociation. He deplored the sufferings of the nations of Europe, but he knew not how to avert still greater evils, to cut off the entail of human misery, but by persevering in hostility against a power which sought the dominion, and with that, the destruction of the world. Besides these most important considerations, there were other reasons which powerfully influenced him in wishing for peace. He was personally interested, as were those other persons, who, with him, formed the administration of the country. By peace, they would be relieved from much labour, much anxiety, much personal responsibility; but this must be a peace with all the attributes of peace. Until he could tell Europe, that he saw in the temper and conduct of the enemy the return of moderation and of good principles, he must prefer war. Nor did he doubt but these were the sentiments of the majority of that House. He was not apprehensive, therefore, that the motion he should presently submit would meet with material opposition. In substance, that motion would give to his majesty a pledge of the unalterable affection of that House, while the continued support of parliament, the assurances of the zeal and unanimity of his people would yield that animating sanction to perseverance and to constancy, which must give energy and effect to such measures as may be adopted to conduct the great contest to a safe and honourable conclusion.

There were two principles material to the question, which directly resulted from this statement, and which must form the basis of all discussion on it. The first was, that France still retained those sentiments, and showed that constancy to those views, which characterised the dawn of her revolution. She was innovating, she is still so;—she was Jacobin, she is still so;—she was faithless to treaty, she is still so;—she declared war against all kings, she continues to seek the destruction of all kings. But he would state the facts, and their lordships would judge of the exactness of his conclusions. Before doing this, it was more in order to state the second principle from whence to reason: and that was, that no safe, honourable, and permanent peace could be made with France, in her present situation, and with her present rulers. Now, what were the facts on which the first of these principles rested for proof and support? The whole history of a war provoked by the ambition and restless spirit of France, and continued in order to check her devas-

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tating progress, may be read instructively for documents and facts. We were, however, to reason from past experience and from present appearances. In the note of M. Talleyrand we found it asserted, that, "from the commencement of the revolution, the republic solemnly proclaimed her love of peace, her disinclination to conquests, and her respect for the independence of all governments." Those were the words of the French minister in the note on their lordships' table; but how stood the facts? "Solemnly proclaimed her love of peace," and yet this love of peace, so solemnly proclaimed, was manifested in being at war in the course of eight years with every nation in Europe, except two, Sweden and Denmark, and next to being at war with America. Was it in this that their lordships would find it proved that France had changed her sentiments, and adopted pacific views? If love of peace were eagerness for war, then might M. Talleyrand well urge it in favour of his government, that the republic solemnly proclaimed her love of peace. But not only was the republic at war with all the nations of Europe, except the two already named, but is at this moment, if not at war, at least on terms of threatening hostility with one of those two states. Their lordships would conjecture that he here alluded to Sweden, whose ambassador recently quitted the metropolis of the republic with precipitation, and the probability of his being replaced was very doubtful. On the other hand, if war has not been formerly declared by France against those two northern powers, their subjects, and the commerce carried on by them, have suffered in aggravated instances from the cruizers of the republic, a series of injuries, of insults, and injustice; tolerable in war, because common to it; but most intolerable in peace, because directly repugnant to the principles of any just peace or recognized neutrality.—He had already remarked, that even America could not escape that ravaging republic. The fact had indeed been, that next to a state of active and inveterate war, was the state of those two republics for a long time. Then surely it was not in those facts that noble lords were to look for proofs that the principles and views of the republic were at length changed from wild, anarchic, and destructive hostility, to a system of justice and love of order. These, however, were not the only facts he had to state as proofs of the hostile mind of France. The war was an aggression in its origin. No single act of their government was free from the direct charge of meditated oppression, or matured contempt for the laws of nations and the rights of individuals. Would any man state, that the original character of the republic is changed, that security for peace is to be seen in their more recent declarations and conduct? But how is it with this other assertion in the note of their minister, "The republic proclaimed her disinclination to conquest." She did; and we have accordingly seen her march her armies to the Rhine, seize the Netherlands, and annex them to the republic. Have we not witnessed her progress in Italy? Are not the wrongs of Switzerland recent and marked? Do we in those transactions discover that disinclination to conquest which the republic proclaims? But it is not in Europe only that France has developed her plan of dominion and her projects of conquest. Even into Asia has she carried her arms, and separated from the Porte a vast portion of its empire.

"The republic proclaimed her respect for the independence of all governments." We had here a very important inquiry, on entering upon which it was right to observe, that nations at war, might, in many cases, respect the independence of other nations. It is not necessarily the condition on which new provinces are conquered, that the conqueror shall violate the independence of those provinces. States may, indeed, change their rulers, but the form and spirit of the general and established institutions may be respected and preserved. Hence could the right of France to extend her line of territory by conquest be admitted, still would it be a violation by her of the laws and rights of nations not to respect the independence of other states. But, with the right of conquest denied her (for how could a government, itself an usurpation, possess that right), her interference in the internal government of other nations added to the criminality of her conduct. Did not Jacobin France attempt the overthrow of every government? Did not Jacobin France arm governors against the governed; and when her politics suited it, did not she arm the governed against the governors? What had been her conduct in Switzerland? In Italy the whole scheme of civil society was changed, and the independence of every government violated.

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The Netherlands, too, exhibit to mankind monuments of the awful veneration with which the republic has regarded the independence of other states? Was it part of the system formed to give permanence to their abhorrence of all interference with the internal government of other countries, to their respect for the independence of all other nations, to publish their memorable decree of November 1792? That decree had not slept a dead letter on their statute book. No, it was still the active energetic principle of their whole conduct, and the whole world was interested in the extinction of that principle for ever.—He claimed it, therefore, as the fair result of the facts he had adduced, that the assertions of the minister of France were contradicted and proved to be false, by a reference to the events of the war, and to the history of the rise and progress of the revolution. The House must have felt, that every fact tended directly to prove that no change had taken place in the sentiments and views of the government of France. How truly the second principle was founded on just conceptions of the views and conduct of the republic, would appear presently. It would appear, "that no safe, honourable, and permanent peace could be made with France in her present situation, and with her present rulers." The proofs in this case were numerous. Every power with whom the republic had treated, whether for armistice or for peace, could furnish melancholy instances of the perfidy of France, and of the ambition, injustice, and cruelty of her rulers. Did she agree to a suspension of arms, it was in order to be admitted into the state of the negotiating prince, that she might the more successfully undermine his throne, by corrupting the principles of his subjects. In no stage of their progress have her generals disguised that they entered neighbouring countries only to despoil the rich of their inheritances; and even poverty itself has been stripped of her rags, of those relics of wretchedness which the storm had not quite torn away, that the republic might yet persevere in her war of extermination to all people and to all kings. The fate of Switzerland was in the recollection of noble lords. Switzerland concluded a truce with the republic; the republic excited insurrections in Switzerland; overthrew her institutions; oppressed her people with contributions; degraded, deposed, or exiled her magistracy; seized on her strong places; assumed the command of her armies; and, to give permanence to the usurpation, imposed on her a government not new merely in form but in name. If again armistice has been followed by negotiation for peace, negotiation for peace has seldom been productive of much else than protracted ruin, or has been the prelude to more destructive war. The history of her negotiations was the history of wickedness, the record of crimes. It was the teeming annals of hollow, deep, inflexible perfidy, of treaties made to be violated without shame, and of alliances formed to be outraged without remorse. Through all Europe these truths were acknowledged, because through all Europe the effects had been felt, and deprecated, of the terrible wreck of thrones and the overthrow of states, which were the issues of French alliance and the pledges of French faith. The grand duke of Tuscany was among the early sufferers by a treaty of peace with the republic. In every thing that abused prince strove to conform his conduct to the views of France; but the train had been laid, and, at a moment when the honour of the republic was pledged for the security of his state, he saw the troops of his ally enter his capital, the governor of Florence imprisoned, his subjects in a state of rebellion, and himself about to be exiled from his dominions. It was to this prince, however, that the republic repeated her assurances of attachment; but the republic that sought not conquest, that would not interfere with the government of other states, deposed the sovereign, and gave a democracy to the Florentines! The king of Sardinia opened the gates of his capital to the republican arms, and, confiding in the integrity of the French government, expected to find his possessions guaranteed by the treaty which recognized his title and his rights, and which guaranteed to France adequate advantages. He was forced to resign his continental dominions, while Turin was treacherously taken possession of by the republicans. History would record these events with the minuteness which belong to them, and in that succession in which, to the misfortune of all nations, they opened on mankind. The change of the papal government was part of that system. It was schemed by Joseph Buonaparte in his palace; and after that ambassador had excited an insurrection, we saw the revolution effected by him at the head of the Roman mob. In the exam-

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ple of Naples was displayed the same contempt of the laws of war and of the rights of peace. The king of that state might have hoped, that towards him the faith of treaty would be observed; for he had done nothing to provoke the wrath, or excite the cupidity of the republic. It was true, indeed, that a war had broken out between that prince and the Roman republic; but was there a man living who doubted but that that republic, in itself, neither inclined nor prepared to commence a war, was instigated by France to provoke hostilities? The subsequent events of the war most fully proved that France was in reality the author of it! for no sooner did the armies of these two states take the field, than the republicans joined the troops of Rome, and, not satisfied with defending the capitol, carried their destroying arms into the heart of Naples. Fortunately, those sovereigns had regained their dominions; but so deep had the principles of anarchy and disloyalty been every where sown, that not even at this hour were the states of Italy in possession of half the comforts of peace; nay, it might be feared, that they experienced rather those hardships which are the concomitants of war. Prussia could not be fairly said to have sustained no infraction of the rights of peace, though Prussia might possibly be considered as having peculiarly shared the tender solicitude of the republic, to avoid war. It was five years since France and the court of Berlin ceased to be enemies in the field; but those who knew what was the sensation produced at that court at the time, could clearly see an infraction of the faith of treaty in the proceedings of France towards Hamburgh. In this city, whose independence Prussia guarantees, the agents of the republic levied large contributions; and all Europe must be convinced that Prussia regarded such conduct as a violation of the pledged friendship of France. Look at Holland and Spain, her allies, or rather her tributaries: how had her treaties with them been observed? The privateers and armed vessels of the republic, that swarm of Buccaneers fitted out to pirate the trade of the whole world, took and carried into the ports of France the vessels of those friendly powers. This was not all; for, in contempt of the acknowledged law of nations, the republic decreed the property of the subjects of her allies lawful prizes, and, to fill the measure of injustice, even appointed consuls in the ports of those very states to regulate the commerce in captured commodities—in the commodities of an allied republic, and an allied kingdom! Reverting to the intercourse of the republic with the states of the empire, the same want of faith was to be discovered throughout. The armistice concluded by the archduke with the general of the republic, was succeeded by the treaty of Campo-Formio. And was this treaty better observed than any of those which went before? It generated the causes of the war which now rages for the second time through Europe. The republics of Italy that might have hoped to find some indulgence from the republicans of France, were next outraged and overthrown by the same arts which we saw successful against princes. After concluding the business of the armistice with the Emperor, and the subsequent preliminaries to a treaty, the French directed their arms against Venice. Here they proclaimed that they came as deliverers, who would release them from the yoke of Austria, which, according to the French generals, had long insulted, betrayed, and oppressed the republican Venetians; but it was a mere proclamation: for in no long time was the republic raised by themselves annihilated, and Venice sold to that very emperor, whose vaunted aggressions and extortions afforded the original pretext for the invasion of the French. Genoa received them as friends; and that the debt of gratitude might be paid in the style of the new school Genoa was revolutionized, and a new government hurried up, while, under the authority of a mock constitution, we saw the people plundered and the country pillaged. But, if injustice against princes and aristocracies forms part of the creed of the modern revolutionist, was justice better observed towards the republics raised especially under the wings of France her own offspring, and affiliated with her? Was it in any or in all these facts that noble lords saw the security to this country from a peace concluded with such a power? But it would be said, that those were not the acts of France more than they were inevitably the result of a state of war. This was easily answered by a reference to the report of a principal member of the new government, who tells the committee of elders, that neither the revolutionary nor the constitutional government was capable of maintaining the relations of friendship and peace with the powers of Europe; that treaties (as with Austria)

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were only made to be broken; and that there was no security for Europe, or even the republic itself, while such a mass of absurdity, of folly, and error, continued to form the basis of the government. So much did the actors in the last revolution believe the statement of this reporter (Boulai de la Meurthe), that they founded their claims to the approbation and assent of the people of France, on the declaration, that their government is founded on a just view of those vices and defects, and on principles which are to stop the revolutions of the republican order.

If, then, the declarations of the rulers of France so entirely support all that his majesty's ministers have, from time to time, stated on the subject of war and peace, what other course would wisdom bid Great Britain adopt, but to await the event of things, to await the result of future experience, and not to enter on negotiation at a time when no one advantage can fairly be expected from it? To attempt to negotiate, would in fact be, to impeach all former decisions, to libel the past declarations of that House, and the good sense and spirit of the people of England; but, above all, it would betray the interests of our allies at a moment when the whole world hails with impatience the renewal of that vigorous resistance to the aggressions of France, which has already produced such signal good, and which, under the blessing of God, may yet lead to the deliverance of Europe from the principles and the arms of the common enemy of man. Thus long he had detained their lordships attention to a mere statement of facts; and so conclusive did those facts appear to him, that he would not attempt to diversify their aspect by arguments. There had just occurred to him a topic which should have preceded much of what he had been stating. This was, the assertion in the note of M. Talleyrand, that this country was the original aggressor in the war. Here his lordship entered into the detail of that question, and reiterated the arguments of ministers to prove that France was the aggressor. He disclaimed all alliance and connexion with any power or powers whatever for the purpose of overthrowing the government of France, especially the pretended treaties of Pavia and Pilnitz: and observed, that so far was the Emperor from meditating such interference, he expressly notified to all the courts of Europe, that he considered the acceptance of the new French constitution by the king as the proper act of the king. The effect of this declaration was, however, but too soon felt by his imperial majesty: for in 1792, when the French invaded his dominions, so unprepared was he, that the Netherlands speedily fell into the hands of the republic. England not only did not mean to interfere with the internal affairs of France, but actually authorized her ministers on the continent to become the mediators between the powers at war. Even M. Chauvelin and M. Talleyrand admitted this. Here his lordship took a general view of the correspondence at that period, and insisted, that in all respects it proved the aggression to have originated with France. He next took a view of the limited question of the practicability of negotiation at this time, and maintained that the reception of our ambassador at Paris and at Lisle, the final result of the negotiations there attempted, and the present temper and conduct of the government of France, were such as not to warrant any man in considering negotiation practicable. But suppose negotiation practicable, were we quite sure that it would not be turned against us into an engine of destruction? Had not the same thing happened to other nations, and did we all at once forget the sworn hatred of the Jacobins against England? Here his lordship commented with much success on the note of the French minister; and with respect to the assertion in it, that the powers of Europe had originally provoked the republic, by refusing to recognize her, "to the exertion of her own strength and of the courage of her citizens," his lordship observed, that more was meant in the original than could be expressed in any translation with appropriate spirit and phrase. It was an artful insinuation that the republic was dragged into the war; but the spirit of the original was, that she carried her arms into neutral states, to make her claims valid against nations at war. In other words, if a neutral state would not commit aggressions on states at war with the republic, or supply the wants of her soldiers, she was to resort to the exertion of her strength and the courage of her citizens, to subjugate and plunder them. It was in this spirit that they invaded and seized on Egypt; and in the same spirit might England expect to be invaded, if, unlike the other powers of Europe, which surround the republic, we were not separated by a channel that, under God, will ever be impassable.

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Let us now examine the proofs, the recorded evidences of which we are in possession, and which will enable us to form a correct opinion of the personal good faith of the first consul. We shall not be destitute of sufficient grounds for judging what degree of reliance is to be placed on his present promises and professions, from considering his past actions, if we trace general Buonaparté from the period when, in the third year of the republic, he imposed upon the French people, by the mouth of the cannon, that very constitution which he has now destroyed by the point of the bayonet. In this consideration I am spared a great deal of detail by the previous statements which I have given to your lordships of the acts of the French general himself, or of those immediately executed under his command. For if a treaty was concluded and broken with Sardinia, it was concluded and broken by Buonaparté—if peace was entered into and violated with Tuscany, it was entered into and violated by Buonaparté—if armistices were ratified and annulled with Modena, and the other petty states of Italy, they were ratified and annulled by Buonaparté—if Venice was first drawn into the war, and afterwards forced to conclude a treaty of peace, that antient republic was drawn into it, and compelled to conclude peace by Buonaparté, that he might with more ease overthrow her constitution, and annihilate the political system by which she had been enabled to exist with glory and security for ages—if the government of Rome was terrified into terms of negotiation, and forced to conclude the treaty of Tolentino, that government was also subverted by Buonaparté—if Genoa was reduced to the same humiliating situation, her wealth and her independence were sacrificed to the will of Buonaparté—if Switzerland was induced to surrender up her rights and liberties by the delusive offers of peace and alliance, she was deprived of them by Buonaparté; for his perfidious designs were carried into execution in that country by general Brune, the same commander whom the first consul has selected to head the army dispatched to reduce the inhabitants of La Vendée. Even the affiliated republics were equally the victims of his destructive perfidy. The constitution of the Cisalpine republic, which was the work of Buonaparté, was overthrown by the hands of his general, Berthier. But this is not all. Let us pass from the continent of Europe, and try if the subsequent conduct of the first consul can furnish a more favourable opinion of his sincerity. When he arrived at Malta, he held the same specious promises of good faith, by which he had so frequently succeeded in betraying states and governments; but he treated that island as a conquered country, and despoiled it of every thing that was valuable. I now come to his proceedings in Egypt. It would be very unnecessary for me to detain your lordships by details with which you are already too well acquainted; but I cannot avoid calling your attention to that part of his conduct which is diplomatic. I shall, of course, pass over his deceitful professions, his rapacities, and the cruel massacres which were perpetrated by his troops, and by his immediate orders. He solemnly declared to the Porte, that he had no intention to take possession of Egypt; he declared to his own generals, that his object was to take possession of that country; and he assured the people of Egypt that he had taken possession of it with the consent of the Porte. What can we think of his blasphemies, his hypocrisies, his repeated acts of perfidy, his multiplied violations of all religious and moral ties? Did he not declare, in the most unqualified terms, that the French were true Mussulmen? Is it in that country that he has laid the foundation for us to rest with security upon the good faith and sincerity which he now professes? Having, therefore, such bases for us to form a correct opinion of his policy, can it be thought inconsistent to believe that he has no intention of fulfilling his engagements? Can we so soon forget his delicate apprehensions with respect to the lives of his remaining soldiers after his flight, and his directions to general Kleber to propose preliminaries of peace to the Porte; to enter into a treaty of peace, and to defer the execution of the articles? "You may," says he, in his official letter, "sign a treaty to evacuate Egypt; but do not execute the articles, as you may observe with great plausibility, that it must be sent home, in order to be submitted to the inspection and ratification of the Directory." — Thus, my lords, we are in complete possession of his system of politics, a system as fraudulent, perfidious, and destructive, as ever was practised, to the disgrace and misery of human nature. Thus are we provided with unquestionable pledges of his future integrity. In the

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correspondence which appears upon your table, his motives are open and undisguised; and there is not the least necessity for having recourse to conjecture to ascertain that he has a double object in his communication. The one is to amuse Great Britain, and the other to induce her to give offence to her allies. I hope I shall not be accused of entertaining any unfounded jealousy of a man, who, having done nothing to redeem his good faith, so often violated, but the overturning the government of his country by the terror of military despotism, now comes forward with proposals of pacification. When we are fully satisfied with the share which he has had in previous aggressions and depredations, can we be too slow in giving him credit for professions of sincerity? Will any security be found in his personal assurances? If his interest be deeply concerned, I grant, indeed, that he may be sincere: but let us for a moment examine this question. I have heard it reported as a matter of opinion, that it is the peculiar interest of the first consul to make peace, and that we consequently are bound to turn that consideration to our own advantage, and meet the overture which has been made to us. It is hardly necessary for me to remark, that in this important business there are three distinct steps to which our attention should naturally be directed: first, the opening of negotiation; secondly, the concluding a treaty of peace; and, thirdly, the observing of the conditions of peace. We should be clearly convinced that negotiation will lead to peace. I am undoubtedly convinced, that it may be the interest of general Buonaparté to consolidate his power; but it cannot be forgotten, that whenever any acts of atrocity were to be accomplished by the French, they have been usually effected by a suspension of arms. The proposed negotiation would relieve France from the present pressure of numerous and alarming difficulties, and could not relieve England from any. The ports of France, which are now blockaded by our fleets and cruizers, would be thrown open for the purpose of introducing naval stores, and a variety of useful and necessary articles, of which the country is in want: fleets, too, would be sent to bring back the troops which are now deprived of all intercourse with the republic, and which might then be employed in augmenting the numbers of the French armies. To us a suspension of arms could not be productive of any benefit whatever. Are our ports blocked up? Is our commerce interrupted? And it will also be considered, that there would, in that case, be no more security for the maintenance of such a suspension than other powers have formerly experienced in similar instances. There is not a merchant in the country that would send a ship to sea without convoy, on such an account. So far I have no objection to agree, that it would be the interest of Buonaparté to enter into a negotiation; for he would derive from it considerable advantages to the commerce, trade, and manufactures of the republic, whilst this country would be left merely in its present situation with respect to any benefit. He would also enjoy the satisfaction and triumph of lowering the tone and the character of a people who have hitherto proved the great and effectual barrier against the encroachments of republican policy, and infuse into our allies and the other powers, a distrust of our resolution and integrity. He would, I entertain no doubt, be inclined to open such a negotiation as that which he directed general Kleber to open with the Ottoman Porte; but the conclusion of peace would be suitable to the views by which the overtures have been dictated. An important consideration occurs to me, and it will, I am confident, have the weight to which it is entitled in your lordships minds. Is Buonaparté now prepared to sign a general peace? Is his power sufficiently established, and the stability of his government so fixed, as to enable him to carry through a treaty of that nature? If he be not prepared, it follows that he cannot be sincere in his offers. On what ground does his power rest in France? He indeed announces, "that he is called by the wishes of the French people to fill the first magistracy of the republic;" and this information he thinks proper to communicate, before it was thought possible to learn whether the French people were so servile, so degraded, as to accept as a gift the constitution which he was forcing on them at the point of the bayonet. He has, it is true, succeeded in establishing a military despotism, and every act of his government is supported by an armed force. For can there exist a difference of opinion with respect to the character of his power, when we learn that an army of 60,000 men is necessary to preserve tranquillity in the interior of France? You cannot, my lords, forget, that in turbulent

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republics it has ever been an axiom to preserve tranquillity by constant action; and that axiom has uniformly been the standard by which the system of the political rulers of France has been regulated. Such is the impulse that actuates the present government of France; such was the grand and leading motive by which Brissot was influenced; and such was the cause of the military operations pursued in the time of Robespierre. That the same system prevails at this moment in France, there cannot exist a doubt; for if Jacobin principles are adopted at home—if Jacobin doctrines are still maintained at home—the principle of engaging the nation in a state of continual warfare must also be strictly adhered to.

I have now, my lords, but little more to trouble you with. If Buonaparté had really shown a particular desire for a general peace, the offer would be less an object of suspicion. He says, that he has given many proofs of his eagerness to put an end to the war, and of his disposition to maintain the rigid observance of all treaties concluded: and he also observes, that this is the second proof of his desire to effectuate a general pacification. For my part, I am at a loss to find any proof of his having entertained such a desire. Does he allude to the treaty of Campo Formio? If he does, we certainly are not in possession of a single fact to corroborate his assertion. We, on the contrary, learn, that his sentiments were then in direct opposition to a general peace, and were particularly hostile to this country. When official intelligence of that transaction was sent by him to the Directory, Monge, speaking in his name, declared, that the French republic and England could not exist together. So that if he even were allowed to have an evident interest in promoting peace, would you not be perfectly justified in pausing and reflecting on what degree of faith should be given to the interest and power of such an individual? You were lately told by the present government of France, that there existed no security, no guarantee, for the preservation of peace in the republic, from 1793 to November 1799; a just remark, and one which utterly confounds all the assertions, all the arguments, all the observations made here, that no change of men in power could effect the execution and permanence of a treaty. Yet such was the language used in support of the negotiation which was carried on at Lisle. Your lordships must perceive how much you hazard, by hazarding all on the faith, on the power, and on the life of Buonaparté. If the last security fail you, what remains behind? Will you place your reliance upon the unanimity of the French people in accepting the new constitution? Will you rest your dependence on the hopes of its permanence. But you are also destitute of every hope from the change which has recently taken place in the persons employed in the different departments of the public service. Men of the blackest characters have been appointed to situations of the greatest trust; persons infamous by the profession of the most licentious principles of anarchy have been raised to places of confidence and power: and those who were judges in the sanguinary tribunals of Robespierre are now exalted to a distinguished rank in the republic. I am only desirous to call your attention to two principles; whether you are of opinion, that while the system of government in France (which you have reprobated) still prevailed, there were any hopes but in the prosecution of hostilities? and whether any event has happened since November, to induce your lordships to alter that opinion? I have now merely to notice what has been advanced here, and repeated, that ministers are determined to restore monarchy in France, and to engage in eternal war sooner than relinquish that object. I have stated this assertion, which has been often made, though it has been as often publicly and solemnly disclaimed. It has been disclaimed after the capture of Toulon, in a variety of instances, down to the present moment, and the slightest alteration has not taken place in the language of government. I do not pretend to deny, that we considered the re-establishment of monarchy as the best, the surest, and the speediest means of restoring peace; but it has never been maintained, that it was the only means of effecting that desirable end. We merely wished for a government that was capable of preserving the customary relations of peace and amity; nor would his majesty hesitate to treat with a republic, a monarchy, or any nondescript form of government; consequently the restoration of monarchy was never made the *sine qua non* of negotiation. If I am asked, what circumstances I may be induced to think proper security for the observance of articles of treaty to be obtained in France, I can only answer

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that my judgment is to be regulated by future events. It would be dishonest to commence any negotiation that was not in every consistent respect likely to terminate in peace. It would be unwise, it would be fruitless. If, in 1795, when France, with her numerous and triumphant armies, threatened all Europe: when she found considerable resources in the spoils and plunder of Italy and Holland; and menaced this country with a formidable invasion; if, when she declared that nothing would content her unbounded ambition and inveterate animosity, but our complete ruin; if, in such a situation, pregnant with imminent danger, the spirit and firmness of this House led them to meet the approaching peril with undaunted fortitude, and enabled us, under the protection of divine Providence, to transmit to our descendants the blessings of national independence, of religion, morality, and social happiness: has any event occurred since, to make us doubt the justice of our cause, and the issue of the contest? If the same spirit continues which then actuated our decisions, I ask, are our means less than they were? Let us direct our views, to our own strength and resources, and to the triumphant successes of our allies. Our object is declared, and will be effected; we earnestly desire a safe and honourable peace. If, then, our means are not inferior to what they have been: if the situation of our allies is improved; if that of the enemy is considerably weakened we have greater grounds of confidence, and we approach nearer to the attainment of our wishes. Upon these grounds I move, "That an humble Address be presented to his majesty to return his majesty the thanks of this House for his majesty's most gracious message, to assure his majesty that having taken into our most serious consideration the papers which his majesty, has directed to be laid before this House, we entirely concur in the opinion expressed by his majesty, that the line of conduct which his majesty has adopted on the present occasion, is conformable to what was required by a due regard to all the most important interests of his majesty's dominions: and that being fully sensible, both of the anxiety which his majesty has constantly manifested for the re-establishment of the general tranquillity of Europe, on a safe and solid foundation, and also of the necessity of firmness and perseverance on our part in those measures which are best calculated to provide effectually for that object, and for the security and permanent prosperity of his majesty's faithful subjects, we shall cheerfully concur in affording such aid to his majesty, as may be necessary for the vigorous prosecution of the war, and for conducting the great contest in which his majesty is engaged, to a safe and honourable conclusion."

The Duke of *Bedford* said, that had he only to follow the arguments of the noble secretary, he should take up but a very little portion of the time of their lordships; but he conceived he had a higher task imposed upon him, namely, that of discussing the principles of the war, and the basis upon which negotiation was to be founded. The noble secretary had attempted to defend the conduct of ministers in refusing to accede to overtures of peace, from the impossibility of any government that France had had since the revolution affording a sufficient guarantee for the success of any negotiations that might be entered into. All the objections now advanced to preclude negotiation, might have been urged when the negotiations were opened at Lisle. The noble secretary had alluded to a particular paper, in which it was said the French still defended their conduct in commencing and carrying on the war. For himself, he was far from wishing to defend their conduct; he would as soon take upon him to defend the conduct of some of those powers who were now our allies, or the conduct of this country when it first established itself in India; the details in either instance would be equally disgusting to the feelings of humanity. The second answer of the French government has been urged as an avowal of principles which formed the basis of the revolution. Was the paper transmitted by the ministers of this country of so conciliatory a nature as not to call upon the French government to defend the conduct of the nation at large in pursuing the war. Did it not tell France, that if it would again revolutionize itself, again change its form of government, and restore its ancient line of princes, this country would treat with her? The noble secretary seemed to think it extraordinary that the French should say they were not the aggressors; and he had endeavoured to show, not only that they were so, but that they had acted infamously and atrociously. Was this language that ought to have been used?

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Had the French made use of any language of so provoking a nature? The style of their government had been the direct contrary. Yet, without the least necessity, the noble secretary had thought proper to load them with every insulting epithet. Did the noble secretary recollect what had been his own conduct when he perceived a disposition on the part of the French agent De la Croix to insult this nation? Unmindful of his own feelings upon that occasion, he had now, upon the very outset of an attempt at negotiation, thought proper to insult them. It was not a question for this House or for this country at present to decide, who were the aggressors, England or France? that was a question to be referred to posterity; it was consequently perfectly natural for either country to wish to throw the burthen of the imputation off its own shoulders, and avoid, not only, the execration of the present age, but the curse of posterity. The noble secretary had replied to the charge, that the war was to be continued with France till the restoration of monarchy. Notwithstanding the answer that had been given to such a charge, he maintained that it existed in full force; for the noble secretary had stated, that every change the government of France had undergone, had violated what had gone before; consequently the inference meant to be drawn was, that royalty was the only one which could afford any certain prospect of stability. Thus it was clear, that the wild scheme of restoring the French monarchy, was the *sine quâ non*, if not of peace, at least of negotiation. What hopes there were of such an event ever taking place by the exertions of this country, he would leave their lordships to determine; but of this fact he was certain, that in proportion as this country oppressed France, in the same proportion did its government become violent: our attempts to destroy Jacobinism had promoted it; and if we persevered, it was likely to be still farther established. When a country was kept in a state of warfare, it was always able to carry on more violent measures than in times of peace. There was no necessity for recurring to France for an example of this truth; look to the history of this country, and to our own statute books, where proofs enough were to be found. If the restoration of monarchy was not the object, what was? Were ministers contending for a more favourable opportunity of entering upon negotiation? How was a more favourable opportunity to be attained? Was it by railing at Buonaparté? He could not, in terms sufficiently strong, censure that littleness of mind, which prompted ministers to attack the character of Buonaparté, with a view to ruin him in the estimation of the French nation; as if by so doing, they would be able to negotiate with more effect. There was something contemptible in the manner of publishing the intercepted correspondence of the enemy; the ministers that were reduced to such paltry shifts reflected more disgrace upon themselves than upon the writers of the letters.—If ministers were really contending for a more favourable opportunity of negotiating, it became the House to consider what prospect the country had of such a change of circumstances. Did we depend upon our allies? Was there any one of our allies who had not shown that he would make a separate peace, if he could obtain one favourable to his views? Had not Austria shown that she had been actuated by views of aggrandizement? Had ministers no reason to think that Russia would fly off from her engagements, if she could do so with advantage to herself? These were points which he did not desire to have discussed now; but he would advert to the hopes entertained of a more favourable opportunity to negotiate, from the internal situation of this country itself. He feared that this country was not in a state of the most perfect tranquillity. Had their lordships considered it with relation to its finances—had they considered that the old system of finance was incapable of being longer applied to the operations of government—that it had been abandoned, and a new one introduced—that that new system had, after a trial of near two years, been found defective, and that it was necessary that some other, more violent in its nature should be resorted to, in order to enable ministers to carry on the war? Their lordships had been taught to believe that this country was able to starve the French: now let them consider our own internal situation, and they would find it alarming to an extreme degree. If they repaired to the fields or the woods, they would every where discover the traces of those miserable wretches whose poverty left them no other resource but depredation. If they contemplated the villages, they would hear nought but the plaintive and unavailing cries of children calling for that food which their parents had not to

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give them. If any of their lordships had been called upon to exercise functions of a magisterial nature, they must have had frequent opportunities of seeing instances of strong and healthy countrymen appealing from parish officers, who had denied them assistance on the ground of their ability to work. True, they had ability to work; but where could they procure it? Such, till very lately, had been the general state of the country. Happily, within these few weeks it had been considerably changed by the beneficence of individuals. But the necessity of affording such assistance to the laborious part of the community, was a proof of the weakness of the country. He did not like to see the majority depend upon the charitable assistance of the few.—What other prospects had we of conquest? Not more than six months ago it had been thought necessary to resort to strong measures, to recruit our army. The fundamental principles upon which the effective force of the kingdom was constituted had been violated, for the purpose of conducting us to victory. That army, which had left the shores of this country with an assurance of success, we had beheld obliged to purchase its retreat from the enemy's territory with disgrace. Would their lordships suffer ministers still to persist? Surely before they were suffered to proceed there ought to be some rational hope of success. The question was, whether the present was a favourable opportunity for peace? He maintained it was. Let the voice of the people call for it, and they would have it.—It was made an argument, that the present government of France had not been tried a sufficient time, and that the disposition of Buonaparté was averse to peace. It was a discovery made by his majesty's minister's, that the views and interests of Buonaparté were hostile to negotiations of a pacific tendency. To disprove this, the noble duke referred to the letter of Buonaparté and his minister Talleyrand, and contended, that peace was the object of Buonaparté's personal wish and desire. He believed Buonaparté sincere, because France wished for peace, and peace alone could consolidate his power. As to the abuse which ministers had thrown upon the character of that man, he felt no concern upon the subject; for he entertained no doubt that they would retract all they had said, if it should be necessary to do so. Let the people tell them to make peace, and they would make it. Without the voice of the people they never would; for they were sensible, that in the calm moments of peace the people would inquire of themselves for what they had been spending their best blood and treasure. They would find, that they had obtained nothing to justify such heavy calamities as war had produced. Such would be their reflections; and ministers, knowing this, wished to procrastinate the war. In short, no negotiation could be entered upon with good grounds of success, as long as the present ministers held their places. He considered the present question as one which was big with the crisis, not only of England, but of existing man, and succeeding generations. It was incumbent on him, as he deemed this a new war, undertaken without a probability of success, to implore their lordships, by the love they bore their country, to pause ere they consented to plunge it into eternal war; for eternal war it must be, if they fought till they conquered France. If France and England were to be eternal rivals, let that rivalship be manifested by other means; instead of desolating each other's territories, and carrying havock and devastation into every part of the habitable world, let the two countries reciprocally endeavour to ease the people from the burthens of war; let them turn their thoughts to agriculture and commerce; let this country be pre-eminent, or vie with France only in the arts of peace. Let each correct the errors of the other. Such a contest would be worthy of both nations. Should we be victorious, we might then exult without offence to God or man. If by his exertions he could hope to produce that state of peace and happiness which he had described, he would willingly toil night and day; but he beheld no change in the disposition of the House. The people too, he feared, supported that disposition. Were it not so, much as their liberties were restrained, they yet might have spoken out; they might have addressed their king; they had not availed themselves of that privilege, consequently he could not but suppose them satisfied. If such was the case, the more responsibility attached upon ministers. Let them be careful that they did not abuse the people's confidence. The people were bending under the accumulated weight of taxes, and it was for their rulers to take care they did not sink. A continuance of that oppression which they had endured, would either make

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them torpid slaves, or prepare them for revolution. If the people were driven to despair by griping tax-gatherers, like France they would look up to themselves, and redress their own grievances. He trusted that the ministers of this country would beware: the recent example of France was before their eyes, and ought to be deeply engraved on their minds. Such were the reasons that had impelled him to deliver his sentiments. If he failed in stemming the torrent, he should in future refrain from troubling the House. Trembling for England, he must then, in retirement, endeavour to dispense that happiness to a few, which he should have been happy in procuring for the country at large. The House could not regard the address proposed by ministers as containing the sentiments of their sovereign, but their own; and as such they should freely and rigorously discuss and examine it. It was his intention to propose another address in its stead, which he should now submit to their lordships consideration. The noble duke then sat down, much exhausted; and lord Holland rose, and read the proposed counter-address, as follows:

"That an Address be presented to his majesty;—To return our most humble thanks for his condescension and goodness, in having been graciously pleased to communicate to us the correspondence between the minister of foreign affairs in France and his majesty's principal secretary of state for foreign affairs; and most humbly to represent to his majesty that, on the 8th of December, 1795, his majesty was graciously pleased to acquaint this House, that he had been induced, by the order of things in France, to meet any disposition for negotiation on the part of the enemy, with an earnest desire to give it the fullest and speediest effect;—That, in pursuance of this disposition, his majesty directed an overture to be made in his name, by his minister in Switzerland, in the spring of the year 1796:—That, on the rejection of that overture, his majesty gave the most solemn assurance, in a note, dated April 10, 1796, that whenever his enemies should manifest more pacific sentiments, his majesty would at all times be eager to concur in them, by lending himself, in concert with his allies, to all such measures as should be best calculated to re-establish general tranquillity, on conditions just, honourable, and permanent:—That his majesty has since entered into two negotiations for peace with the French republic at Paris, in the autumn of the year 1796, and at Lisle in the summer of the following year 1797:—That his majesty has repeatedly and solemnly declared, that the rupture of both those negotiations was solely to be ascribed to the determination of the French government to reject all means of peace, and to pursue, at all hazards, their hostile designs against the prosperity and safety of these kingdoms:—That, on the failure of the negotiation at Paris, his majesty, in a manifesto, dated the 27th of December, 1796, was graciously pleased 'to renew, in the face of all Europe, the solemn declaration, that, whenever his enemies should be disposed to enter on the work of general pacification in a spirit of conciliation and equity, nothing should be wanting on his part to contribute to the accomplishment of that great object:'—That on the rupture of the subsequent negotiations at Lisle, his majesty had again declared in a manifesto, dated October 28, 1797, that 'he looked with anxious expectation to the moment when the government of France should show a disposition and spirit at all corresponding to his own;' and that 'he then renewed, before all Europe, the solemn declaration, that he was yet ready to conclude peace on the same moderate and equitable principles and terms which he had before proposed:'—That we, his majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Lords spiritual and temporal, in parliament assembled, impressed with the justice of these sentiments, and equally anxious for the re-establishment of tranquillity, and for the preservation of the honour and dignity of his majesty's crown (of which we are, by the constitution, the hereditary advisers), cannot conceal our regret at perceiving that his majesty has been advised to reject the first overtures for a general pacification on the part of the enemy; and we beg leave most humbly to implore his majesty to give directions for the immediate renewal (if possible) of a negotiation for peace with the French republic, most fervently beseeching his majesty to recur to those principles of moderation and equity so solemnly and so repeatedly avowed, and which, if strictly adhered to, must either ensure the speedy restoration of all the blessings of peace, or render our enemies alone accountable for all the calamities too certainly attendant on a continuance of hostilities."

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Lord *Boringdon* said, that the present question was simply, whether they would or would not assure his majesty of their support in the present contest, until such times as it should appear that, in any treaty to be concluded with France, the security of his own dominions and of Europe could be sufficiently provided for? This was the sum and substance of the address which had been proposed; and it was from being thoroughly persuaded that no token of such security existed at the present moment, that he called upon their lordships to support the address which was then before them. That the safety of the country would, at least, have been risked by present negotiation, was not incapable of proof. A revolution, perhaps the most important of any that France had yet witnessed, had lately placed upon the throne of power in that country—he would give him no epithets —certainly a most extraordinary man. It was utterly impossible to guess how long he might remain there; and consequently equally impossible to feel any security with respect to his power of observing any treaty that might be concluded with him. In case of his being driven from his present situation, how probable was it that he might be replaced by that faction, whose old cry of eternal war with England, would, no doubt, lead them to put an immediate end to any treaty which might be depending between the two countries. In this case we should be entirely at the mercy of France, and should have the shame and mortification of knowing that we were so entirely from our own haste, and imprudence. It was not a little remarkable that in the second French note, not one word should be said respecting peace with the allies. Even, therefore, if we had acceded to the French propositions, it was highly probable we might have left in existence the continental war; we might have enabled France, in a certain degree, to have recruited her forces;—we might basely have allowed her to bring her whole strength against the powers now in alliance with us:—we might have left alive the military habits, spirits, and occupations of that military nation:—and we might have prepared for Buonaparté's successors a power more formidable than that now enjoyed by Buonaparté himself. On these accounts, he could not but think that it would be the height of misconduct to risk by present negotiation all the numerous advantages which the firmness and perseverance of parliament, the high spirit of the people, and the energy of government, had so successfully combined to procure us.—He totally differed from the noble duke in his opinion, that the personal character of Buonaparté did not enter into the present question. So far from it, the risk which was attached to present negotiation was greatly augmented by it. It was impossible for their lordships to dismiss from their recollection what was the character of the man in whose person was now concentrated the whole government of France. It would be difficult for their lordships to believe that power was, in this instance, likely to produce effects so opposite from those which were usually attributed to it: that it was here so particularly likely to soften the heart of one who, beyond any other man, appeared indifferent to the lives of others; that it should here eradicate every inclination to deceit, and substitute sincerity; that it should restrain ambition, and engender moderation. It had been said by the noble duke, that ministers, by their answers to France, had declared eternal war. He did not see how this proposition could be proved. Short of present negotiation, they could not have more strongly expressed his majesty's anxious desire for the restoration of peace. In waiting for the test of experience and the evidence of facts, there was nothing that bore the appearance of unwise or useless delay. If government was justified in pausing a short time after the establishment of the last constitution, at least there was nothing in the nature of the present which could prejudice them more in its favour.—The noble duke, notwithstanding the solemn manner in which the secretary of state had disclaimed any such idea, had said, that, the restoration of monarchy was become the *sine qua non* of peace, or, at least, of negotiation. Those accusations against ministers had repeatedly been made in that House; with what degree of correctness the negotiations at Paris and Lisle would determine. He had ever considered the restoration of monarchy in France as a means to peace, and in no way as a just and legitimate end for the continuance of the war. He thought it highly desirable for the tranquillity of Europe; though it was an event of which he did not entertain the same expectations with, perhaps, many of their lordships. At the same time he did not think that the noble duke could be borne

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out in his use of the epithets, wild and frantic, which he had applied to such an expectation.—The noble duke had charged ministers with a breach of promise in not adhering to the declaration made after the breaking off of the negotiations at Lisle. But did the noble duke conceive that that declaration was to remain in force to the end of time? The very terms in which it was couched proved that no such intention could have been entertained. Nor could it reasonably be supposed, that the same conduct would be adopted in situations so extremely different. Since then, Italy had been rescued from the tyranny of its invaders; the flower of the French army had been destroyed in Africa; the immortal battle of the Nile had been obtained. Could it be expected, then, that we should now accede to the same terms to which we then offered to agree, or that a declaration should be binding two or three years after it had been issued?—The noble duke had been led to hope that any negotiations for a peace would now be crowned with success, because the rulers and the people of France both equally wished it. He most sincerely believed that the people of France anxiously wished for peace. But, since the death of Robespierre, had not every French government made the same pacific professions?—Upon the whole, thinking that there was no mark of stability in the government of France; that the nature and character of that government justified our expectation of something beyond mere profession, he called upon their lordships to support the address as it had been originally moved.

The Earl of *Romney* said, he wished earnestly to give ministers his warmest support, but he thought that they had acted improperly in rejecting with such abruptness the overture from France. Neither could he agree in all the conclusions of the noble duke who had moved the amendment. The conduct and intentions of France did not appear to him so laudable, nor those of the British ministry by any means so reprehensible, as he had represented them. He had little faith to put in Buonaparté's professions: the chief consul might mean by these merely to perplex our government, and to render himself popular at home. But, in this case we had laboured that he might gain his end. We certainly should have entered into a negotiation, and seen what terms he would have offered us. We should have said, "We formerly made propositions of peace to you, let us now hear the nature of yours." From this no bad consequence could have followed. All military operations were at present suspended at any rate; and the preparations might have gone on with equal vigour for the next campaign. If the terms offered by Buonaparté had been unreasonable, they might have been rejected. The odium of continuing the war would thus have been thrown upon him, and every Englishman would have contributed with cheerfulness to carry it on. His lordship concluded by paying a high compliment to his majesty, whose eminent virtues, distinguished moderation, and fatherly care of his people, made the weaknesses and vices of the rulers of other nations appear more glaring by contrast. These being his sentiments he could not vote for the address; nor should he vote for the amendment.

The Earl of *Carlisle* said, that this was not a war to preserve a trifling colony, or to gain an extension of dominion; but a war to preserve our laws, our liberties, our religion, our property—every thing we held dear. We fought for security, and we should accept of no offers of peace until it was established on a permanent basis. By carrying on the war, we had obtained every object we proposed to ourselves in beginning it. We had destroyed that monster which preyed upon the vitals of the constitution, and threatened its existence. We had checked the career of the conquests of France, which, there was reason to dread, would spread misery and desolation over every country in Europe. We had obtained security, and security we should continue to enjoy by persevering in the contest, and by that way alone. To enter into a negotiation at present would be to ruin the country. He thought, however, that it would be more prudent merely to thank his majesty for his gracious communication, and not to give any opinion upon the conduct of the executive government. The address pledged them to continue the war till the responsible ministers of the crown should say that the period was come when peace would be secure. This was a subject unfit for their discussion. They only knew a part of the transaction, and ministers might, not improbably, have reasons unknown to them, to justify the answers which had been returned to the overtures of the French government. He thought very highly of ministers: they had by their pru-

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dence and steadiness saved the country, which would inevitably have been ruined, had the opposition been allowed to carry into execution their impolitic projects. He only wished that they would not shift the responsibility which they themselves were so able to bear, upon others who must necessarily be incompetent judges.

Lord *Holland* said, that one great point was ascertained by the correspondence, which materially changed the relative situation of the two powers. We could no longer say, that the continuance of the war was to be ascribed to the avowed animosity of the enemy. What, then, were the arguments by which this step was justified? What are the objections now urged to any negotiation with the present government of France? There was one circumstance of which he could not help taking notice, because it seemed to proceed on an objection which had not been openly acknowledged, and which he hoped did not exist; but it was remarkable, that in the title of the correspondence, there was a studied anxiety to avoid giving Buonaparté the title which belonged to him as chief consul of the French republic. He was styled general Buonaparté. This appeared to proceed from a wish not to recognize him in the character which he claimed — and the French republic was never named, but only the country of France. Certainly, however, a negotiation with a government did not sanction that government. It was merely a recognition of power, and nothing more. But the recency of the late revolution in France was one of the principal objections insisted upon. On former occasions, ministers had not considered such a circumstance as affording any objection to negotiate, as of itself it could be none. When the late constitution of the French republic was established, ministers, by a message on the 8th of December 1795, admitted that a crisis was approaching that might lead to the termination of the contest. On that occasion, six weeks had been sufficient to determine their minds. What greater objection, then, could apply to the present government of France. Was there any greater appearance of instability in this government, than in that which had satisfied ministers on so short a trial? Would any man contend that more danger was to be apprehended from the present government of France than any former one? Was not the direct contrary the case? Had not every thing of a destructive tendency been abandoned? It was clear then, that the objection was not against the revolutionary principle of the new government. Was its ambition, then, so dangerous now? That the conduct of France had been detestable on different occasions, he did not dispute: but it was said, the republic had broken every treaty it had concluded. The noble lord, on this point, perhaps, might have left more strength to his argument if he had omitted certain treaties in the enumeration; for instance, it was by no means clear that the French had violated the treaty with Prussia. There was no proof that any of the various governments of France had acted upon the principle, of the treaties of one government not being binding on that which succeeded it.—As to the ambition which characterized the present government, that was a consideration that might have weight in the arrangement of terms; it was not a preliminary objection preclusive of all treaty. It was said, that Buonaparté might be insincere. Cases might be supposed, in which strong grounds to suspect the sincerity of an overture might justify a refusal to negotiate, especially if negotiation might lead to danger. Nothing like this was the case here. There were no good reasons to imagine that the French government was insincere. On the contrary, every day tended to demonstrate its sincerity. It had done all that depended on itself to evince that disposition. What else could be expected from Buonaparté? Was it reasonable to suppose that he should admit that the guilt of the original aggression lay with France? This was a point, which ought not to have come into discussion. He was happy here to find that against the noble secretary's present arguments, he could produce his own authority: in an official correspondence during a former negotiation, the noble lord, in a note to the French government, expressly stated that there was no reason to go into the question who was right or wrong, in a preceding negotiation; the object was, to negotiate upon the actual circumstances of relative situation, and upon the real grounds in dispute.—After dwelling upon the objections to peace, the noble secretary did not say how it was to be obtained. The note in answer to Buonaparté's communication hinted at a mode, indeed; but what was

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that? Suppose that Buonaparté, desirous to obtain peace by every means, should sit down to consider how he could succeed in the object of his wishes; what did the note allow him to do? He would find, that the restoration of the hereditary line of kings was the only case in which a speedy peace was admitted to be possible: his own government must be proved by experience, and the evidence of fact, before it was admitted to negotiate. But what was this experience and evidence of facts? Formerly, six weeks were judged sufficient; now, the probation required was neither ascertained by its duration, nor by the mode in which it was to be conducted. In fact, therefore, the restoration of the hereditary line of kings was the only alternative in which immediate negotiation was admitted by ministers. But surely, if the ambition of the French Republic was so formidable, we could not forget this ground of apprehension, and this source of danger, when we talked of restoring the House of Bourbon. Had we forgotten the recorded charges of the parliament of this country against the ambition of the French monarchs of that House, at various periods? Had we forgotten their almost proverbial ambition? And was their restoration the remedy for evils arising from such a source? Every Frenchman, however, suspected, that the restoration of the ancient family would be so clogged as to render France insignificant. Frenchmen, therefore, could not be supposed to enter into our views in that respect. As to that event, if it were likely to take place, to him it did not seem so desirable as some imagined. He did not look upon it as affording the prospect either of security to this country, or of much tranquillity and happiness to France. It was said, in the note in reply to the first communication from the French government, that the most natural pledge they could give of sounder principles, was the restoration of that family which had maintained France in "prosperity at home, and in respect and consideration abroad." It was, indeed, a singular circumstance, to observe so much anxiety in ministers for the prosperity of France. But what respect and consideration was here alluded to? Was it the respect of justice, of moderation, of wisdom? No; it was the respect arising from the power of France, and was founded on no better claims. To promote the internal prosperity, and the external respect and renown of the French monarchs, surely could not be considered as British objects. We complained in the note of the recency of the revolution as precluding immediate negotiation; and we recommended to France, in the same breath, to make another, as the speediest means of restoring peace. We talked of the ambition and insincerity of the republic as objections, and then mentioned as a remedy a government and family proverbially insincere and ambitious. We apprehended instability, and then expressed a hope that, for the sake of peace, they would adopt a form of government which, in the present circumstances, must be unstable and precarious. France, however, by the decision of ministers, was to be put in a state of probation, if she refused the alternative of the restoration of royalty, till she had renounced all the principles complained of, or till she was ready to acknowledge the guilt of original aggression. But how were we to be satisfied that these changes had taken place, unless we agreed to negociate? The noble lord had stated with much pomp and solemnity, that the second letter of Talleyrand contained a principle more detestable than any at the very worst periods of the revolution. On hearing this assertion, he had perused the letter with additional attention; but he could discover in it nothing of this dreadful description. The French minister did not defend every act of every preceding government. He stated, that the perseverance of this country had driven France into excesses; but if the avowal of this principle was atrocious, what was the practice of it? And, unfortunately, it was too true that the example of this country might give to France an apology for some part of her violence. What had been our conduct to neutral powers? Had we not violated the neutrality of the grand duke of Tuscany, in spite of the most solemn treaties? Had we not violated the neutrality of Genoa? What was the conduct of our allies? Did not Russia violate the neutrality of other states? When we saw such unjustifiable proceedings on the side of those who made the crimes of France the cause of the war, it proved that this was nothing but a pretext. Ambition was objected to France; but was France the only ambitious power in Europe? It was said, that interest alone induced France to keep well with Prussia; but might not the same interest prompt her to observe faithfully

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the engagements of treaties? Buonaparté had given every proof of his sincerity. Much was said of the character of Buonaparté. He could not perceive that any advantage could arise to us from blackening the character of an individual. It was not dignified; it was not politic. We had now taken up the principle so much objected to the Jacobins, of distinguishing between a people and their government. What, on the contrary, was the conduct of the French? In his letter to the king, Buonaparté distinctly renounces this principle, and acknowledges the title and character of his majesty's government. On our part, the note of ministers was a manifesto to the royalists, and framed for that purpose. It spoke of the miseries of France; but the miseries of France were not the cause of the war. They might interest our humanity, but they were not fit to be noticed in diplomatic papers. As little had we to do with the internal miseries of the republic, as Talleyrand would have to retaliate, by reproaching us with the Test act, the want of parliamentary reform, the Income tax, or any other public measure that might be considered as a grievance. There was, indeed, one argument against a negotiation, and it was the only one that had made any impression at all on his mind. This was the apprehension of sacrificing the Chouans, with whom we might have engagements, and whom he feared we had incited to their present imprudence by our money and intrigues. This argument the noble secretary had not urged; and he did not blame him for suppressing it, as it was a delicate subject, under all circumstances, for a minister to talk of; but there could be no impropriety in his saying a few words on the subject. He would be as averse as any man to sacrifice those whom we had incited; but was it not possible, if peace, in a spirit of conciliation, was concluded, that we might render these Chouans a service greater than we did by furnishing them with assistance? Was it not possible, he had almost said, was it not certain, that, by continuing the war, we were dooming them to destruction? It was a dreadful thing to reflect, that by the obstinacy of ministers, we might be condemned to carry on the war for years, without gaining any advantage which we might not receive from negotiation at the present moment. He was convinced that the people at large disapproved of their abrupt refusal to listen to any overtures; and if it should afterwards clearly appear that Buonaparté had been sincere, how would their lordships reconcile it to their consciences to have given their implicit sanction to measures that prolong the calamities of war, without any motive of honour, interest, or security? He therefore gave his decided support to the amendment.

The Earl of *Carnarvon* said:—I do not quite like the present question, as it stands on the proposed address, much less on the amendment: I should rather have approved that the address had contained simply thanks to his majesty for his communication, and left the conduct and undiminished responsibility to ministers. The present question had been debated upon a wrong ground; it has been treated, as if we were to decide by the vote of to-night, whether this country should be plunged into a long and ruinous war, or make an immediate peace; this is very far from being the true state of the question. His majesty has been pleased to communicate to us proposals of peace, from a government which has just made its appearance in France, together with the answers made by the noble secretary of state; we have to give our approbation or disapprobation of those answers. I have no difficulty in saying, that they appear to me well calculated to meet all the possible intricacies of our situation with our allies. In declining negotiation, the noble secretary does not reject distinct propositions, which may be considered by our allies, and evidenced by speedy ratification and immediate execution. In every point of view I approve the answer, it marks with dignity and spirit, that we shall not, through our sincere wish for peace, be the dupes of artifice; that it is not the nature of the government, but its sincerity and faith, of which we have so many reasons to doubt, which alone impedes peace; that we shall not quit our advantageous situation on the first song of peace, nor betray our security and that of our allies, to the known and experienced perfidy of an insidious enemy, without something more than mere professions. I understand by what the noble secretary has said this night, that he means only to justify a pause necessary to understand the situation of this new ruling power, its force, stability, and interests, not that he rejects peace. He has detailed, in strong colours, the numberless perfidies of the several revolutionary governments which

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have succeeded each other in France; he has likewise detailed the individual reproaches due to the character of its present ruler; nothing certainly can be more disgraceful than his conduct; but the character of the ruling sovereign has never been the sole reason for rejecting a peace with any nation, nor repeated breach of national faith the sole reason for continuing a war. Breaches of faith as enormous and disgraceful, are imputable to the ancient legitimate government of France. Where can be found in the history of mankind, a more atrocious instance of insidious treachery, or more perfidious breach of faith, than that which took place on the treaty of peace which preceded, and was disturbed by the capture of Falkland's island? At the very moment that Spain and France signed peace with this country, an order was signed by the minister of Spain, in concert with the duke de Choiseul, to attack Falkland's island, on a given date some years after, in order to produce a rupture, resolved on at the very instant of executing a treaty, professing perpetual amity; at the time when this sealed order was opened and put in execution, it suited the interest and views of neither court, and produced equal astonishment in both. M. d'Ossun, then ambassador from France to the court of Spain, from whom I heard this anecdote, was directed to remonstrate against this act of aggression, which embarrassed the court of Paris; he found equal surprise at Madrid, for the order was forgotten by both, nor was recollected till the attack was defended by the production of the order. Is any act of the revolutionary governments more indefensible than the interference in our American embarrassments, by the late unfortunate monarch of France, then in a strict alliance with us, and professing amity? History is full of disgraceful proofs of national want of faith. Peace must always be made when the interests of both parties require it, and will seldom last longer. I own that I cannot agree with the noble secretary, that peace is not consistent with the interests of Buonaparté. The noble secretary says, that military governments in their nature lean to war, and that a sovereign with feeble title, will divert the people from attention to his title, by the alarms and dangers of war; this policy seems to me to apply more to old and established governments, who wish to divert the attention of the public from internal misconduct, by the superior interests arising from war; but this policy is by no means applicable to the position of the present ruler of France. He is called out of Egypt that his military reputation may be the key-stone to power, raised by the intrigues of others, out of the ruins of an expiring republic. The reign of attornies and mountebanks, controlling generals and armies, from the capitol, is at an end; the reign of generals is commenced; Buonaparté is the first whose military reputation has placed him in the seat of power; he has all the dangers of newly-acquired power, without having gradually advanced to it by his own intrigues, they are dangers equally to be apprehended from his present friends, and from all those who envy his exaltation; he must maintain himself by his own intrigues against even his creators; he cannot therefore quit the capital, and command in person the armies of the state; he must trust his armies to the ablest generals, their failure or their success are equally fatal to him, and equally tend to undermine the foundation of his power. The first advances a Bourbon to the throne; the last raises a formidable rival, with equal claims to his own, and furnishes him with the means of asserting it. I cannot doubt, therefore, that it is the personal interest of the present ruler to obtain peace, and preserve it; his stability is the only doubt I entertain; even peace may not be able to confirm his power; there can, however, be no great difficulty about the terms of peace, as between France and this country; and if there was, should Buonaparté feel that peace is necessary for his private interest, he will not scruple to sacrifice the interest of France to acquire it. I am not, therefore, without hopes that the horrors of war may shortly cease, either by the overthrow, or the confirmation of the present power in France, but I do not think negotiation and suspension of arms necessarily the shortest road to peace. I am decidedly against interference with ministers in this critical time, being persuaded they wish peace as sincerely as I do. I shall therefore concur with the address as it stands.

The Earl of *Liverpool* said, he was satisfied, from every view of the situation of the two countries, that it was highly prudent to pause before ministers entered into a negotiation for peace with Buonaparté. Let their lordships shortly com-

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pare the two situations. France had lost her marine, had lost her commerce, had lost her trade; she had not a single merchant ship in any of her ports, for every one of them had been converted into petty, pilfering privateers, sent out to prey upon our commerce. Her revenue was adequate to her expense in no way whatsoever. On the other hand, our revenue was increasing; our commerce had prospered beyond all example. In fact we might almost be said to have the commerce of the whole world in our hands. Ought we then to consent, by a rash and premature negotiation, to open the ports of France, to let them share our commerce, to enable the republic to revive their drooping manufactures? Much had been said of the sincerity of Buonaparté; but would any man versed in state affairs, manifest so little judgment as to rely upon the mere professions of sincerity of an individual who had shown so little sincerity in his military transactions during the war? The famous resolution of the 19th November, 1792, declaring the intention of the republic of France to use their endeavours to overthrow the government of every other state in Europe, stood as yet unrepealed: no mention was made of a design to rescind it in Buonaparté's letter to his majesty, nor had they seen any steps taken in Paris to rescind it. In like manner, had they renounced their unheard-of practice during a war, of annexing for ever to the French republic every state and territory that they subdued by their arms, and declaring that they were not to be made the subject of future negotiation? Would it not be in the highest point disadvantageous for this country to agree to an armistice? Under such an armistice, during negotiation, France would have every thing to gain, and this country every thing to lose. By the answer given to Buonaparté and M. Talleyrand, it was not declared that this country would not treat, or wished to wage eternal war. It, on the contrary, declared the express wish of his majesty to treat for peace, when he could do it with security.

The House then divided:—Contents, 79; Proxies, 13. Not-Contents, 6; Proxy, 0. Majority, 86. The minority were, the duke of Bedford, the earl of Albemarle, lords Ponsonby, Holland, King, and Camelford.

Protest against the Address.] The following Protest was entered on the Journals:—

"Dissentient,

"Because the Address adopted by the House directly approves of the rejection of an overture for peace, when that invaluable blessing might very probably be attained with honour and security, by opening a negotiation with the French republic, and indirectly approves of the language in which the rejection of the offer was conveyed to the French government; a language which, in my opinion, can only tend to widen the breach between the two countries, to exasperate the enemy, and prolong the calamities of war.

(Signed) "HOLLAND."

Debate in the Commons on the King's Message respecting Overtures of Peace from the Consular Government of France.] Feb. 3. The order of the day being read, for taking into consideration his Majesty's Message, and the Papers relating thereto,

Mr. Secretary *Dundas* said:—Sir; accustomed as I am to take part in the internal transactions of his majesty's government, it will not be thought extraordinary if I should move an address approving of that correspondence which has been just read, so far as it respects the administration of this country. Sir, on this subject I shall trouble the House with a few observations: it is a subject which it is impossible for us to consider properly, without adverting to the circumstances and situation in which we are placed, as decisive of the conduct which we ought to pursue. We are not now at a stage of the business to be at liberty to bring forward opinion, and conclude from theory and speculation. Experience has decided the question, and, thanks to it, we are to dispute on the merits of the French revolution, whether it be that glorious work, which some have fondly imagined it, or whether it be a transaction that has produced more mischief, horror, and devastation, than the political history of the world affords example of. Sir, in considering the question before us, I must call the attention of the House to the leading principles of that revolution, whatever form or shape it may assume. I do not, however, mean to enter into a detail of circumstances on this point. Experience has saved me the trouble; for I state it as an undeniable fact, that the leading feature of the French revolution, illustrated by the uniform tenor of its conduct to foreign states, is a total disregard for all treaties and obligations, and a sovereign

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contempt for the rights and privileges of other powers. If it were necessary to adduce a proof, I should refer merely to one transaction. Has there been, I ask, any attempt to palliate the French decree of the 19th of November 1792? a decree constituting it a part of their bounden duty to excite insurrection and sedition in other states, for the purpose of overthrowing their existing governments. I contend, that this proclamation contains the code of the revolution, and that its spirit never has been departed from. I have no hesitation to confess, that the French revolution professed its object to be purely pacific, and at an early period proclaimed such to be its intention. I admit a proclamation to that effect, shortly after the revolution; but it is necessary to recollect whether this that was professed was its real genius and character? and a singular thing it is, truly, that in the interval between the date of that proclamation and the present moment, there is scarcely a nation that has not been either at war with France, or on the eve of being so; not from any ambition or want of faith on their part, but in consequence of the open violation of subsisting treaties, and direct aggression by the French republic. In proof of this assertion, I beg leave merely to recite the names of the different nations with which it has been at war within that time, Spain, Naples, Sardinia, Tuscany, Genoa, Geneva, Modena, Venice, Austria, Russia, England, Egypt, aye, and even that creature of its creation, the Cisalpine republic; so that Denmark and Sweden are the only two kingdoms that have not been in actual hostility with it. Sir, is it nothing that this should arise, not from accident, or any fortuitous combination of circumstances, but from the inherent principles of the revolution; and that, from a strict adherence to them, negotiation has been ineffectually tried, or, in case of its success, grossly violated by France, with respect to the nations with which she was at war; and that in the case of the two countries to which I have alluded, they have, in consequence of her hostile conduct and aggression, been under the necessity of recalling their ambassadors? This, then, being the strong feature of the revolution, the peculiar character of the Jacobinical government of France, and it being manifest that a principle in opposition to the spirit of peace and treaties, has characterized the French revolution, the question resolves itself simply into this, whether that constitution, such as I have described it, does or does not exist? In arguing this point I have no occasion to resort to abstract reasoning, I have only to state the authority of the supporters and advocates of the late revolution, every one of whom is of opinion, that, it was impossible, from the nature and constitution of the French government, that it could present any thing but continual war to all nations within its sphere of action. This is no description of mine; it is the account given of it by those who have lived under it, who have taken an active part in its administration, and who judge, from a ten years experience of its merits. Having thus ascertained, from the testimony of the French themselves, what the government of France was, I am led, by the natural progress of discussion to inquire what it is now. Are the practices of which all other nations have complained, now reprobated by France? Are the principles of aggression and ambition on which she has acted laid aside? It is a mistake to suppose that these principles were essentially connected with the Jacobinical form of government, and therefore must stand or fall with such form. In one part, no doubt, the Jacobinical government is at an end, in point of form; but in substance and essence all the other qualities of the revolutionary government are as much in force at this moment as they were in the days of Barrere and Robespierre.

What, then, the peculiar nature of the change that has recently taken place may be, or whether it be for the better or for the worse, with respect to the people of France themselves, I shall leave others to decide. But if we consider the change in relation to other governments, and the degree of confidence which they ought to place in the future conduct of France, the only difference that I see between the present and any of her former governments is this, that the others were derived from republican assemblies, representing the people; and, though the people always, and these assemblies often, were nothing but the blind instruments of the executive, the appearance of the constitution was still preserved; whereas all this is now at an end. Form and substance are all now concentrated and consolidated in the hands of Buonaparté, and the government stands with a military despot at its head, with unlimited power and au-

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thority to revive the practice of forced loans and requisitions, to wield the force of the state as he pleases, and resort to all the resources of the revolutionary government. Upon this question I may expect to hear, if as I have stated on the authority of the French themselves, there was no security afforded by the government of France for a faithful observance of treaties with other nations previous to the month of November last, whether it has afforded any since; and here I contend, if gentlemen will take a review of that interval, that they will not find a single security in the present government of that country which was not possessed by all those that preceded it, and that have been condemned as defective in that particular. Under these circumstances, recent overtures are made for opening a negotiation for peace. This proposition his majesty's ministers have thought proper to reject, assigning at the same time, as a reason, that, as all the former attempts made for that purpose had proved abortive, or if successful, were followed by violation, nothing yet presented itself, arising out of the present revolution, that promised any other termination to any negotiation which we might now enter upon, or afforded greater security than what we possessed before. To these observations I cheerfully subscribe. In the first place, we are not certain of the sincerity of the overture; and secondly, if we were, there is nothing of stability yet acquired by the present government to satisfy us, that, if sincere, it affords security for the observance of treaty. This, then, is the outline of the argument that I mean to pursue; and I wish the House to consider, whether it would be consistent with the line of conduct whith it has uniformly followed, and justified by the dreadful expense of blood and treasure to which we are indebted for our present situation, to risk it by entering into a negotiation with a government of which we have had no experience, and which affords no security, that we are aware of, beyond any that preceded it.

Laying aside then, all personal considerations of Buonaparté, but viewing his government in a general and abstract point of view, as a recent assumption of power, I ask, What are the circumstances of confidence that it affords? What are the grounds on which we have security for the due observance of a treaty in the event of its conclusion? To ascertain these points, we must resort to the power with which we have to deal for a criterion by which to try the question. In doing this, we are sometimes decided by the character of the king of a country, sometimes by the conduct of his ministers, and sometimes by the general conduct and character of the government; but is there any one of these criteria to be found in the present case? Is there any one of its ministers, or any thing in the executive power or government of the country, of sufficient standing to afford any of these criteria? If then, in the present instance, we have none of these rules by which experience enables us to judge in treating with other powers, all rest upon the assertion of the party himself, declaring that he is of a pacific disposition, accredited, it is true, by his minister Talleyrand; for to him he has referred, as appears from the correspondence, to vouch for this pacific character. It is not this country's business, however, to judge the private character and conduct of Buonaparté. He is the repository of the power of France, and it is only as connected with that situation that we feel an interest in his disposition. In this view, then, I shall consider it; and here let it be understood, that it is far from my intention to entire into any abuse or railing against the character of Buonaparté: I disavow any such intention. At the same time, I must confess, I have an old national prejudice about me, so far influencing my judgment, as to make me regard the blasphemer of his God as not precisely that sort of man with whom I could wish to treat. But any objection of this kind I readily wave, and wish only to consider him in the character in which he forces himself upon the House, namely, as professing a pacific disposition, and proposing a negotiation for peace. I say, I am bound to consider the character of the man as connected with his proposal, before I can feel sufficient inducement to tempt me to enter into negotiation. Sir, I put the question to the House, whether the person who represents himself as of a pacific character, and commits himself as a lover of peace, be that sort of man to whom I can look for sincerity in his proposition for a negotiation for peace, or fidelity in the event of successful issue? With regard to the first, I shall not enter into the history of the countries with which France has been concerned in a variety of transactions,

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executed through the medium of other agents and ministers. I shall refer merely to the cases in which Buonaparté has been the only agent, the scenes in which he has been the sole performer. I shall not place to his account the contribution imposed on Hamburgh, nor the conduct observed by France towards Spain and Portugal; but I shall refer you to the Cisalpine republic, to Naples, Venice Genoa, Tuscany, and Sardinia; for in the case of all these, the conduct of France was the conduct of Buonapartè himself. With regard to Venice, what was his conduct to that state? He entered it on the faith of a previous proclamation, avowing that his sole object was to protect it from falling under the power of Austria. What was his first act? The dissolution of its government. What was his second? His surrender of it to the very power against which he declared his only object was, to afford it protection. What were the circumstances of his conduct with respect to the Cisalpine republic? A proposal of a treaty of commerce and alliance was made to it by France, which the government of that republic had the audacity to decline; and for this free and just exercise of its rights, the persons who exercised it were punished by Buonaparté. With regard to Malta, we have never heard of any aggression committed by her against France, any ground or pretence of hostility; yet the attack upon that island was open, and that attack conducted by Buonaparté. What, then, I ask, has been the conduct of Buonaparté with regard to Egypt? It is not pretended that there was any aggression on the part of the Ottoman Porte. But what has been the conduct of Buonaparté? His last act, before he left that country, was, to send a memorial to the grand vizier, stating, that he came to it without any hostile intention; that his only object was, to relieve him from the tyranny of the beys; and that he (the grand vizier) had only to desire him to withdraw with his army, and the order should be instantly obeyed. But what does this man, who makes such pacific and friendly professions to the grand vizier, say, when writing to general Kleber? He desires him to enter into a negotiation with the Ottoman Porte, but to endeavour to prevent the evacuation of the country by the army until after a general peace, that he might still preserve a chance of retaining that country. We have this man stated as a lover of peace; yet all this unprecedented conduct to the Ottoman Porte, the old friend and ally of France, is the conduct of Buonaparté, who, in his proposal for negotiation, plays the double dealer with that government to whom he professes sincere attachment, while the instructions to the respectable officer whom he leaves behind, are of a quite contrary import.

These are the views of his character, of the most recent parts of his conduct, that I wish to consider; I regard him in the character in which he wishes to be understood, as a negotiator for peace; and I fancy the House has anticipated me in the inference which I mean to draw from them. This inference is, that, by the late revolution, we are deprived of all the criteria of sincerity and fidelity which we ought to find in a power with which we would negociate, and are obliged to rest on the sole character of the French consul himself, with this disadvantage, and strong objection to it, that there is not a single case on record in which he has not violated his faith; and I state it again, and I am ready to prove, that in all this catalogue of crimes he himself has been the actor of the principal parts; and that, not only when acting under the order of government, but from the uninfluenced impulse of his own mind, and the dictates of his own conscience, in which capacity he appears in the several transactions alluded to, and in all of which he has conducted himself in utter contempt of faith or friendship. If I am right in stating these facts, the conclusion I draw from them is, that we should be sure that there was something more of sincerity in the negotiation which he now proposes, than characterises that which he entered into with the Ottoman Porte; that there should be some proof, arising out of his conduct in the transactions with which he was connected, to evince a truly pacific disposition, but, unfortunately, nothing of this kind is to be found; the current runs the other way. In short, there is not a single step on which you can set foot, that you do not find marked with hostility and breach of faith. But, it has been said, why not make the experiment? if it should not succeed, we should be just where we were before. But, does any gentleman seriously mean to say, that in the present relative situation of Europe this would be an experiment perfectly innocent in its nature?

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If we succeeded in the last campaign in calling forth the exertions of foreign power, in exciting the energies of Europe, and in making the most illustrious efforts —if we have reason to be proud of the share we have contributed to these achievements—is it a matter of indifference, to dissolve that connexion to which they owe their birth, and to send the other nations of Europe scrambling for a peace, deserted and abandoned by us, their allies? Is this, I say, a matter of indifference? and yet this would be the first effect of an acceptance of the overture. But this question I shall leave others to decide. I shall only contend, that without something to rest upon for sincerity in the proposal, and fidelity in the observance, it would be a degree of insanity to open a negotiation. On this point I may be told, that the present reduced state of France affords an ample security; but this is a double-edged weapon, that may cut both ways. The weakness of France may produce a desire for negotiation, for the purpose of gaining time, recruiting her strength, and assuming a more formidable attitude; but it affords no proof of desire (when her private views shall be attained) to conclude the negotiation when entered upon, or to observe it when concluded. Are we then, I ask, to stretch out our hands to nurse and uphold the usurpation of Buonaparté, to assist him to consolidate his power, and become the instruments of his strength, that we may see it, when opportunity shall occur, turned against the powers that created it? Sir, before this line of conduct shall be adopted, I hope ministers will pause and weigh well the consequences to which it would lead. It is a dangerous experiment, and the moment it is made, there is an end of all the bright hopes which we feel. I therefore contend that there is no force in this argument. But, it may be said, in case Buonaparté should not be sincere, are you in a worse situation than you were with the ancient line of French princes? The difference between the two cases is as great as between light and darkness. I do not contend, that the House of Bourbon was not actuated by a spirit of aggrandizement: but how and in what manner has that spirit showed itself, and been brought forward in action? Has this been effected by the passions of the lowest classes of the people, by dissolving all the bonds of society, by bearing down all principles? These were not the engines resorted to by the old government of France; yet it was in this manner, and under these circumstances, that the French revolution has commenced its attack upon other nations. Sir, it is not France in arms that I dread; but I dread a government founded upon principles which afford no security to other nations. The government must therefore be overthrown, or its powers so reduced as to incapacitate it from wantonly injuring others. It is only in one of these two cases that this country can be brought to treat with France. The former I should prefer; for in the latter case we must never be off our guard, but keep the eyes of an Argus on her constition. Such are the principles that arise out of her present purer unadulterated Jacobinical government.

But I shall be told, that, according to this argument, we can have no peace with France, unless under a prince of the House of Bourbon. This argument has been often stated and restated, and as often misrepresented. But now we have it upon record, where it is stated, that, however desirable such an event, the restoration of royalty in France is not the only security which we would accept against that government by which the world has been so much disturbed. Gentlemen have the text before them, and may make whatever comments their ingenuity can suggest. But I may be asked why prefer the ancient government? The answer is two-fold. First, because we know the worst of the former government. We met it before; we should know how to meet it again. The second reason is, because I should be extremely sorry that any government should prove stable, which is founded on the principles of the present French government; as the security of all nations calls out loudly against such an example; and it would be of the most dangerous consequence, were the nations of Europe to see, notwithstanding the combined opposition of various powers, a successful usurpation founded upon those principles which constitute the peculiar spirit, the heart's blood, I may say, of this revolutionary government; for I do not think it comparable with any other revolution of which I have ever heard. As to the revolution in this country, it was against the person of the sovereign who had violated his engagements; but when the grievance complained of was removed,

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was there any question about principles? How unlike is this to a revolution which has torn up all principles by the roots—which has broken all the bonds of society! I say, therefore, that it is the wish of my heart, that no revolution founded on such principles should prosper. I do not confine it to the case of such a revolution deposing a monarchy; but, if the government of France had been of any other form, and had been set aside by a Jacobinical government, my objection to it would be equally strong.—Sir, there is another topic mentioned in the official note, to the following purport: you have, it says, already wished to enter into negotiation with the republic of France, why then decline it now? It does not follow, that because a measure might be prudent at one time, it must be so always; for it has been observed, that the treaty of Campo Formio has been productive of more blood and devastation than any other event of the present day. But I do not rely on this as an answer. I do admit, that, within these ten years past, this country has twice entered into negotiation with France; once at Paris, and once at Lisle; but I contend, that there was no part of administration that was not deeply impressed with a sense of danger at the time, in the event of such negotiation proving successful; that the feelings of ministers were repugnant to the measure, and that the government of the country would have found that a treaty, if concluded, would have proved a calamity. But notwithstanding this view of the subject entertained by ministers, there were many collateral circumstances which forced them to the measure. The body of the country allowed themselves to be deluded by false fears and speculations, that a longer continuance of war would induce insupportable taxes, and our resources must quickly be exhausted; and that it was prudent to try whether a peace might not be had on reasonable terms, to save us from the inevitable ruin which we dreaded from war? The attempt was therefore made, and proved unsuccessful; but let us not again sacrifice the honour of the country by adopting such a line of conduct. Let us not depress its spirit, and degrade ourselves, to be so stupid as not to learn some little wisdom from experience. For what did that attempt (which is now urged as a proper rule by which to regulate our conduct) prove? It proved, that there was no sincerity on the part of France in the course of the negotiation; for concessions were made by us, yielding every thing that a power that was not implacable could wish, and yet they did not satisfy. I need not mention what passed at Paris; at Lisle still greater terms were offered; but all these were not deemed sufficient. Has, then, the government of France, I ask, changed since? Has not the expedition to Egypt and Switzerland happened since? And are not all these sufficient to decide the question of sincerity, and that repose is not their real object?

Under these circumstances, I contend, there is no remedy but the overthrow of such a government, or its weakness and inability to disturb the tranquillity of other states. Sir, let me ask whether, in the event of a peace having been then made, we should now be at war? And whether the correspondence with the Irish rebellion would not have gone on just as it has since done? I ask another question. Can there be a doubt that the expedition to Egypt would have taken place? It is true, there is no national treaty binding us to that country? Yet, I believe there is no man that hears me, who believes that had that event taken place, we should now be at peace. No man will rejoice more than I do, when peace and tranquillity shall return; but in proportion as I wish for it, I must be anxious for its permanence. Sir, I have only one topic more, if at present we had successfully terminated negotiations, if the treaty of peace were actually signed, would you venture to disarm? Is there a man here who would advise his majesty to disband his forces and dismantle his navy? How does Prussia stand? She has to support a large army to maintain her line of demarcation. How would you stand? You would have a garrison in every foreign colony; so that you would have all the expense of keeping up a great force without the power of exercising it. I say, therefore, that before you conclude a peace under such circumstances, you must consider whether it would not engage you to pledge yourselves to refrain from all hostility against France, leaving her at liberty to act against the different governments of Europe, while your hands were tied up, and you were held back from every thing but the expense. Under these circumstances, I do not think this government would act wisely, were it now to enter into negotiation. We have put

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no absolute negative on the question; we say that we will be guided by experience and the evidence of facts, in our judgment of sincerity and fidelity; without which qualities in a government, all negotiation with it must prove either useless or injurious.—Mr. Dundas concluded with moving,

"That an humble Address be presented to his majesty, to return his majesty the thanks of this House, for his most gracious message, and for having been graciously pleased to direct that there should be laid before this House, copies of the communications recently received from the enemy, and of the answers which have been returned thereto by his majesty's command: To assure his majesty, that we consider the conduct which his majesty has held on this occasion to be such as was dictated by his regard to the most important interests of his dominions, and that, while we join with his majesty in looking eagerly to the period when it may become practicable to re-establish the general tranquillity of Europe on a sure and solid foundation, and at the same time provide effectually for the security and permanent prosperity of his people, we shall feel it in the interval our indispensable duty to continue to his majesty, on behalf of those whom we represent, our firm and decided support in such measures as may best tend to confirm the signal advantages which have been obtained to the common cause in the course of the last campaign, and to conduct the great contest in which his majesty is engaged to a safe and honourable conclusion; and that, impressed with these sentiments, we shall not fail to make such provision as, under the present circumstances, may appear to be necessary for the several branches of the public service, and for the vigorous prosecution of the war."

Mr. *Whitbread* said, that having been always of opinion that this war might have been avoided in the first instance, and having uniformly opposed its progress, he could not refrain from delivering his sentiments on the present occasion. The right hon. secretary had set off artfully enough, by calling the attention of the House to all those enormities which had taken place since the commencement of the French revolution, and asking if any person would now justify it? For his part, he (Mr. W.) had ever maintained but one opinion on the subject, and he was free to say, that had it not been for the interference, the folly, and ambition of the other powers of Europe, the French revolution would, at this time, have borne a very different complexion. But every attempt to repress its evils had only disseminated them wider. Added also to this, a worse effect followed, which was, the extinction of liberty in almost every part of Europe, under the pretext of counteracting the licentious principles of France. The right hon. gentleman had said, that from the commencement of the revolution, France had shown a sovereign contempt of treaties, and, within these ten years past had been at war with almost every state in Europe. In saying this, he had only pronounced his own panegyric; for he had informed the House, that he thought it his duty to invite every power in Europe to unite in one common cause against France, the common enemy of mankind. In this he had succeeded; but whether from want of good faith, ability, or power, the views of the allied powers had been frustrated, and the French revolution had always risen superior to their adverse endeavours. The right hon. gentleman objected highly to the conduct of the French rulers in respect of neutral nations; but did he not recollect the conduct of Prussia towards Hamburgh? Did he forget lord Hervey and lord Hood, who ordered the French ministers to be dismissed from Florence? Did he forget Mr. Drake at Genoa, and the threats which induced that neutral power to dismiss her French inhabitants? There certainly was a great oversight committed by the right hon. gentleman, in complaining so much of the French for that very crime in which we ourselves were equally involved. The want of good faith had been alleged as a reason for not negotiating with France; but he should be glad to know if his majesty's ministers had always acted upon principles of good faith in their former negotiations with France? —Mr. Whitbread next proceeded to remark on the mission of lord Malmesbury to Paris. The Jacobin government then existing was no obstacle to a negotiation in the estimation of his lordship, or of those who sent him. He was not commissioned to insist on a renunciation upon their part of existing principles, or on acknowledgments tending to their own crimination. Yet, without these essentials, these preliminaries, his lordship expected good faith on their part to any

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treaty that might have been concluded; otherwise his attempt at negotiation could not have been sincere. But how did the present professions of ministers agree with this their past conduct? Or how could the declaration of his majesty be at all justified, unless we clearly understand, that even a Jacobin government may be treated with on principles of reciprocal good faith? For his majesty, even at a time when the country was elated by the victory of lord Duncan, had declared his pacific wishes to the French nation. Things, however, were now changed, and his majesty's ministers had abandoned the idea of treating with a Jacobin government, though it had been before no interdicted thing, but his majesty had fairly and fully declared, that he was ready to treat with such a government. Two attempts were made to this effect; nor were the French to be justified for any share they might have in rendering them ineffectual.—In the second negotiation at Lisle, one set of negotiators were recalled, and a more Jacobinical set sent in their places; still no objection was started to farther negotiation; but his majesty declared in the face of all Europe, that he was ready to conclude a treaty with them, if their overtures had been at all reconcilable to the honor and interests of his subjects and his allies. A revolution in France now puts in power one person instead of five. This person thinks proper to make overtures to his majesty; and this he does in a manner agreeable to the rights of civilized nations, and in no way incompatible with that respect which is due from one crowned head to another. In saying "crowned head," he disclaimed every intention of softening by any terms, whatever crime attached to the first consul of France in his late assumption of power. His power, however attained, if once consolidated, must be respected, as well as the most legitimate. But, as it now precariously stood, the House were called upon to consider the propriety of negotiation; to discountenance which, many arguments had been drawn from the character of the first consul, who was represented both as an infractor of treaties and an unprincipled blasphemer. Every topic that could revile, and every art that could blacken, had been resorted to, for the purposes of political slander; and he was very sorry to see, that the Intercepted Correspondence from Egypt strengthened and embellished with notes, and perhaps too, garbled, had made its appearance with a view to prejudice the country against the chief consul, and thereby to set at a distance every hope of a negotiation for peace.—It had been said by the right hon. gentleman, that Buonaparté had in no one instance ever observed a treaty, or kept an armistice. But before attention was paid to such vague assertion, the House should turn their eyes to matter of fact. It was well known, that the preliminaries of Leoben were not broken, or the peace with Austria infringed by Buonaparté; for before these events took place he had left Europe. Even by any influence in the councils of France, he could not be supposed to have had a hand in the infractions of those treaties. The conduct of Buonaparté at Venice, Mr. W. did not attempt to defend, any more than he did that of Austria. They were both alike culpable, and both, so far as their transactions at Venice went, equally worthy of being treated with. France at all times had been notorious for her want of faith in keeping treaties; but it was known also, that other governments kept them no longer than they were found beneficial to them. England was now smarting under the treachery of Prussia, who took a subsidy from us, and then ran away from her engagements. England, however, was said to be actuated by nobler views, and to respect and adhere firmly to treaties. Now, he would put it to ministers, whether they had not endeavoured repeatedly to provoke Austria and Prussia to an infraction of their treaties? Their charity, he was afraid in this instance, began at home. This general charge of want of good faith he did not mean as any justification of the violation of treaties; but to show, that if ministers would treat with none but immaculate governments, they could never expect to have an ally or friend.—Another charge was brought against Buonaparté, namely, his conduct towards the Cisalpine republic. But this was totally unmerited on his part, as it was the entire act of the Executive Directory. The right hon. gentleman then came to the Egyptian expedition, whose detail was said to be replete with horrors. Before he would give credit to what was lately published concerning it in the intercepted letters, or form any judgment of the conduct of Buonaparté, he would beg to know if the documents laid before the

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public were just as they were found—nothing kept back, and nothing modified to answer any sinister purpose? Waving this objection, however, he would take the letters just as they are; and on an examination of them, he could not but charge the right hon. gentleman with some degree of inaccuracy in his statements. It was said, that Bounaparté ordered general Kleber to negotiate with the Porte, but to delay the completion of the treaty till such time as he should hear from France. The completion of the treaty was the evacuation of Egypt, which Kleber might very well have been told to delay, without any reasonable charge of treachery on the side of Buonaparté. It was said, that he who could have invaded Egypt ought never to be treated with. To seize and colonize that country had always been a favourite scheme of the old government of France. The only difference, therefore, between the two, was, that the new government of France had executed what the old one had only planned. Treachery of that kind, however, was not confined to France, for Prussia could sieze Silesia; and three of the first powers in Europe, while England was a tame spectator, could divide and appropriate to themselves the unfortunate kingdom of Poland. Yet Austria and Russia, the chief agents in this transaction, were still our good and true allies; and with this contradiction staring them in their faces, ministers refused to treat with one whom they deemed treacherous and unjust. Buonaparté was full as good as they were; if he had broken treaties, so had they; if he had killed his ten thousands, Suwarrow also had killed his ten thousands.—The right hon. gentleman had said what he wished to be the result of the war; it was the reinstatement of the Bourbon family on the throne of France; and for this England was to be drained of her blood and treasure. If the conduct of Buonaparté was fairly considered, he might appear much more worthy of confidence than was generally supposed. His letter to his majesty was full of good sense, equally free both from republican familiarity and courtly adulation. Preparatory to any negotiation, the right hon. gentleman seemed to suppose that it was necessary for Buonaparté to renounce all the principles of the former French governments. This was completely done. He had said that his majesty ruled in the hearts of his subjects; and had changed his address entirely from the republican mode. This certainly was a tacit renunciation of the principles of his predecessors, and as much as could be expected from the governor of a great nation. The perfidy of Buonaparté had been discerned in his attempt to make a separate peace; but this disposition did not appear in the letters on the table. There was not one expression which could lead us to suppose that he was less willing to treat with the allies of England than with England herself; and, perhaps, had his first dispatches been treated, with any reasonable consideration, the next courier sent by Buonaparté would have brought over his proposals for treating with those allies. Pacification now seemed to be the wish of Buonaparté: this the whole tenor of his correspondence amply testified: and the forcible expressions he had made use of, though indirect, sufficiently proved that he meant to include our allies. All the arguments, therefore, drawn from a contrary supposition, to set aside a negotiation for peace, must be suspected of being rather unsound and fallacious. But let it be supposed, that while we refused to negotiate, our allies acted a contrary part, and seized the moment of pacific overture from Buonaparté. What then would be the consequence? We should be left to negotiate at some future time on grounds far less advantageous than the present. The right hon. gentleman seemed to forget the humiliating circumstances of a former negotiation, the necessity of which was dictated by a desertion of our allies. Such an event might happen again; and how far it was prudent to submit the country to such a contingency, the House were then to judge. The present government of France had met the unqualified abuse of the right hon. gentleman; it was unworthy of all confidence: there could be no security in its most solemn treaties; but the question still recurred, How could we treat with a former government, stained with the same crimes, and chargeable with the same levity of councils? The restoration of the ancient line of princes was a desirable event. What, therefore, was asked of Buonaparté? Or what had ministers, in their communications with him, endeavoured to exact preparatory to a negotiation for peace? That Buonaparté should acknowledge himself a usurper, recant his principles, and descend from the throne that he now filled, to accommodate a branch of the

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family of Bourbon. Such was the very modest desire of ministers, and what, no doubt, their sincerity had led them to suppose the chief consul would comply with. But was it really the wish of the people of England to lavish their blood and treasure to restore to the throne of France the family of Buorbon? There were, he knew, some fanatics who would contend for this; but he hoped their numbers were few. The majority of the people, he believed, possessed better sense, and would wish to fight in a better cause. The right hon. gentleman carried his veneration of the ancient royal family of France to an extravagant length, by an endeavour to palliate their crimes; if they were perfidious, their perfidy was of a noble kind; if ambitious, their ambition was of the most sublime nature. Had the right hon. gentleman forgotten the conduct of Louis 14th, in his seizure of Holland, and the perfidy of the Bourbon family during the American war, by which a whole continent was separated from its mother state? It was from the perfidy of this family, that the very revolution itself might take its date. Louis 14th had acted the part of the most cruel tyrant, in his persecuting for religion, and extirpating, by the edict of Nantes, so many thousands of his best subjects. By such means were the affections of its subjects alienated from the Bourbon family; and was it the duty of this country to reverse the penalties they chose to inflict upon it? Could it be supposed that it was the duty of Englishmen to restore a banished king to his throne, or the pope to his tiara? Mr. Whitbread insisted, that we were now contending either for one or other of these two things: to reinstate a Bourbon on the throne, or to exterminate the rest of those persons in France who held Jacobinical principles. If the former supposition was true, we were fighting, he thought, for an unattainable object, and the contest must be endless; if for the latter, we were fighting for an opinion; and both were equally absurd. Buonaparté himself had done more to ruin Jacobinism, than any other person, by taking all the executive authority into his own hands, destroying clubs, and repressing the licentiousness of the press. That great organ of sedition was now laid asleep. Buonaparté well knew that till that was done his situation could not be secure. It was denied that the war was continued to reinstate the family of Bourbon, however desirable such an event: the destruction of Jacobinism was already accomplished; for what then, it might be asked, was the war continued? Till Buonaparté had consolidated his power, and was able and willing to maintain his engagements. To some indefinite time, therefore, we were to go on, amidst all the calamities and expenses of war. The farce of Lisle was to be repeated over and over again, as we found ourselves distressed—we were to sue for negotiations—receive some new insult—get the national spirit roused, and fight with redoubled vigour. The letter of Talleyrand had been urged as an apology for that of lord Grenville. But if the first was objectionable, the second was respectful. It came in the way also which the forms of our government required: neither did it contain one offensive expression. Such was the apparent sincerity of the present French government. They would negotiate, if we would let them. So unexceptionable had their conduct been, that arguments drawn by lord Grenville from the first letter were forced to be employed to answer a second, and a very different one. A complete negative, however, we are told, is not given to the overtures of Buonaparté for peace; and so far as this was the case, it might be fortunate for the country. Before however, any decision was made on the present question, the House should consider the relative situation of this country with her allies. The allies do not appear to enter at all into each others views; there seems to be no regular point of union between them—no community of interests. One of the coalitions against France had already failed, and a single fortunate event on the side of France might occasion a second dissolution of such heterogeneous materials. Austria did not pretend to have any communication or connexion with us—she had even refused our subsidies. The emperor of Russia had declared *ipso facto*, for the restoration of royalty in France. England could not say quite so much on this subject, however it might be an object of her wishes. On this point it appeared to him that Russia was deceived. and we were also deceived with respect to the cordiality existing between Austria and Russia. In the foreign papers, one party blamed the other for its want of success in the latter part of the last campaign. No treaty existed between them

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that bound them to any one point, or united them in one system; but they were all moving in irregular orbits. Between Russia and England their could be no common cause. The alliance between Russia and the Porte was but a rope of sand. The emperor of Russia evidently wished to aggrandize himself at the expense of the Porte. Could it be supposed, therefore, that the allies would ever act in any kind of concert, as one man? and, without this, combined operations could not well be successful. Mr. W. then brought to the recollection of the House the case of America, which had been insulted by France, and every thing at one time bore the appearance of hostility, yet the president of that country had pursued a line of conduct very different from what we had done, by appointing a person to negotiate between the two countries. This conduct the ministers of this country might have adopted; its salvation, he thought, depended upon it. Mr. W. concluded by saying, that under our present circumstances, we ought not to refuse the proposals of Buonaparté for a general pacification; and that it was the interest of this country that a peace should be concluded as speedily as possible.

Mr. *Canning* said, that much as he differed from the hon. gentleman who had just sat down, in almost every argument which he had advanced, and in every inference which he had drawn, respecting the past conduct, or present views and situations of this country and of France; there were no points on which he differed from him more entirely, than on the position which he had laid down at the beginning of his speech, that the origin and causes of the war formed no part of the present question: and that which he had insisted upon in a subsequent part of his speech (and which, coupled with the foregoing, did indeed go to preclude all discussion upon the question to any useful purpose), that it was highly unnecessary and improper to enter into any investigation of the personal character of the present first consul of the French republic. Grant the hon. gentleman these two assumptions, and there was an end of our deliberations; there was no longer a subject before the House which it could be of the smallest advantage to examine; there was no longer any test by which the propriety or impropriety of the conduct of government could be tried. Take away the consideration of the aggressions of France in the commencement of the war, and her conduct during its continuance; and take away, at the same time, the liberty of inquiring freely into the grounds and justice of the pretensions put forward by the person now at the head of the French government; and what remained, by which to estimate the comparative policy of refusing, or of having accepted, the overtures for negotiation? How were the House to judge of what would be the conduct of France under the present circumstances, but by a review of what had been her conduct hitherto? By what means were they to decide how far the power, and the personal dispositions, of the present chief ruler of France superseded the necessity of recurring to the examination of the conduct of France under its preceding revolutionary governments, unless they were permitted to inquire, in the best way that they could into the probable sincerity of those dispositions, and the probable stability of the power for giving them effect? It was singular, however, that while the hon. gentleman denied to the side of the House on which he sat the right of reviewing the past transactions of France with foreign nations, and with this country, and the advantage of contrasting the professions of the chief consul with his former principles and conduct; he had himself no scruple in taking that liberty with the character of his own country, which he thought unwarrantable in respect to that of the enemy; and he felt no delicacy in going back to the crimes and errors of monarchical France, and depicting the dangers which Europe had in former times had to dread from the overweening ambition, and tyrannical usurpations of Louis 14th though he thought any such animadversion upon republican France no way to be justified, and considered the usurpation of Buonaparté as privileged to an exemption from censure or inquiry.

The conduct of Great Britain in the earlier part of the war, the hon. gentleman declared to have been so unprincipled, and her aggressions and insults against neutral and unoffending nations so gross and outrageous, that nothing of what was imputed to France could stand in competition with it, in point of enormity. No violation of the law of nations, no infringement of rights, nor infliction of calamities, with which France was charged,

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could, in the eyes of the hon. gentleman, equal the glaring injustice and oppression of our conduct towards Genoa and Tuscany. The transactions respecting Genoa and Tuscany, Mr. Canning observed, had been made the ground of much unjust accusation, and appeared to him to have been wholly misunderstood. The short statement of that which related to Genoa was simply this: Genoa was considered, at the beginning of the war, as strictly neutral, and as such, was respected by his majesty's fleet in the Mediterranean, until it was found that, in spite of its pretended neutrality, the Genoese government allowed France to derive constant and large supplies of provisions for its armies, from their Genoese territory; and that the repeated friendly remonstrances of the commander of his majesty's fleet, and of his minister at Genoa, had been employed in vain to prevent the repetition and continuance of a practice, which all the laws of civilized war gave them a full right to complain of as a departure from neutrality. When these admonitions had proved ineffectual, recourse was had, and justly, to threats; which threats, however, be it remembered, were never carried into execution, and, perhaps, the only thing with which his majesty's government had to reproach itself, within the whole of this business, was, that it did not allow the system of intimidation to be pursued far enough to answer, for any length of time, its justifiable purpose; nor was there any thing that could be represented as contrary to the laws and rights of nations in what was done, or what was threatened on this occasion; nor any thing that could be considered as even harsh and rigorous, except, indeed, by those who conceived that the French had a privilege, uniformly, and in every case, to exact to the full, not the observance of the duties of neutrality towards them, but the violation of them in their own favour, and that in proportion as France was exorbitant in her demands, we were to be humble and self-denying; that we were to take as an excuse, from every neutral state that might choose to conciliate France by favour and partiality, the assertion, that truly they could not help it; that France was so pressing, and so peremptory, that they were obliged to consult their own safety by concession: in short, that we were to submit to all the disadvantages of a strict and scrupulous forbearance on our part, while France enjoyed all the advantages of unqualified exaction; and that, in compassion to the weakness of the states who could not preserve their line of duty towards us, we were to omit every opportunity of doing justice to ourselves. A system of miserable imbecility, which he did not wonder France should be loud in preaching, in order to reserve to herself exclusively, the right of departing from it in every instance; but one which he trusted this country would never adopt, so long as it had a just sense of its own rights, and power to assert and to enforce them.

With regard to Tuscany, much the same observations would apply. France had continued to derive every assistance, and England felt every inconvenience in the conduct of the war, from the ill-observed neutrality, and partial policy of Tuscany: a partiality not more disadvantageous to the cause in which England was engaged, than it was manifestly prejudicial in its effects, to the security of the grand duke's government, and to the real interests of his dominions. Tuscany had been from the beginning of the war, the center of the French conspiracy against the peace and independence of all Italy; and even in the councils of the grand duke himself, it was justly apprehended that there had penetrated a degree of French influence, dangerous alike to his own states, and to all his neighbours. Under these circumstances Great Britain was not only justified, but was called upon to assert her own right to be treated with fairness and impartiality, and was warranted in employing the most peremptory terms to enforce the respect which was due to her, and in representing amicably, but forcibly, to the Tuscan government, the double danger in which it was daily involving itself, from the resentment of the allies on the one hand, and the overbearing domination of France on the other. Representations to this effect certainly were made by lord Hervey, then his majesty's minister at Florence; and, if, in executing the orders of this court, lord Hervey was hurried by his zeal for the service of his sovereign, into expressions of any thing like intemperance or disrespect, it ought not to be forgotten, that upon the statement of this circumstance, accompanied with the expression of the grand duke's displeasure, and desire that lord Hervey should be recalled, that desire was instantly complied with, lord Hervey was immediately recalled;

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and thus the best and most satisfactory reparation was made to the government of Tuscany, and the character of the government of England completely cleared. Nor was this, however, all: the conduct of lord Hervey, though admitted to be such as to occasion this complaint of the court of Tuscany, and to draw down upon him, in consequence, this mark of disapprobation of his own court, was yet not entirely such as it is represented in certain publications, from which, in this, as in other instances, the hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House probably derived the information, on which they thought it expedient to ground their charges against the powers at war with France. In the same collection of state papers, which contains the treaty of Pavia, and the secret articles of the treaty of Pilnitz, both gross and impudent fabrications, without the shadow of foundation, or the pretence of authority; in that same publication, resting on similar grounds of authenticity, is even to be found a pretended note from lord Hervey, addressed directly, and personally, to the grand duke of Tuscany, of which it was sufficient to say, that no such note ever was presented; no such note ever was transmitted from lord Hervey to this court; nor was it ever heard of by any person connected with the government of this country, until it made its appearance in the same volume with the treaty of Pavia and Pilnitz [Mr. Canning here read a copy of a paper, purporting to be a note from lord Hervey to the grand duke of Tuscany, dated September 2nd, 1793]. He read this note, he said, not as conceiving that the circumstance of such a fabrication having been contrived, did away all ground of complaint against lord Hervey. The complaint he had admitted to have existed; and it had been satisfied by lord Hervey's recall. But he did think that this, coupled with the other instances to which he had referred, of the spurious treaties of Pavia and Pilnitz, might have the effect of making gentlemen a little cautious in future how they adopted, and relied upon as authentic state papers, whatever trash it might please the friends of France to publish as such, for the justification of her cause.

He had one word more to add upon the subject of Tuscany. The hon. gentleman had appeared to rely upon the conduct of Great Britain, in this instance, not only as a set-off against the outrageous proceedings of France towards neutral nations, but as a ground of her proceedings towards Tuscany itself in subsequent periods of the war, particularly in the invasion of Leghorn, and the seizure of British property there in 1797. He had already, he trusted, done away the impression of the hon. gentleman's argument in the former respect, by showing that Great Britain had not conducted herself so flagrantly as was represented, and that, in the instance in which her minister had outstepped the line of his instructions, he had, with the condescension becoming a great country in its intercourse with a weaker state (whose very sense of its own weakness might, perhaps, make its feelings the more irritable, and its honour the more jealous), done every thing in her power to atone for the offence. In other respects France can derive no defence from the conduct of Great Britain; for, subsequently to all that passed on this occasion through the medium of lord Hervey, and, consequently, to Tuscany's being considered by France as having become a party in the war, against her, a separate treaty of peace was concluded at Paris between the grand duke and the French republic. And it was in violation of this treaty, that the French army under general Buonaparté took possession of Leghorn, and seized and confiscated British property to an immense amount, deposited there under the protection and guarantee of Tuscan neutrality; a violation of the laws of neutrality almost unparalleled in extent and atrocity, except by other examples to be found in the conduct of the French themselves, and an outrage for which the government that permitted, or, what is in strictness the same thing, could not prevent it, is responsible to the government whose subjects have suffered by it; which, therefore, gave to his majesty, if he had chosen to make use of it, full right of reprisal, and which gives to the moderation observed since in the conduct of Great Britain towards Tuscany, a character of the greatest magnanimity, generosity, and forbearance.

After all, however, if it were in other respects proper and reasonable to retrace the conduct of France at former periods of the war, and if the conduct of Great Britain, in regard to other nations, left them at liberty to do so, the hon. gentleman had contended, that the ministers had given up all right to look back, by

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entering into a negotiation at Paris, and afterwards at Lisle. And he had farther insisted, that the declarations published in his majesty's name, at the conclusion of each of those negotiations, had bound the government of this country to enter into negotiation anew, at least to receive overtures for peace, whenever the enemy might show a readiness to treat with them. The reasoning (Mr. Canning said) seemed to him to be by no means correct. This pledge given by the declarations of his majesty could in no fair construction be made to apply so widely and so eternally as the hon. gentleman was desirous of having it believed. As to the declaration made after the Paris negotiation, whatever might be the promises held forth in future negotiation, they were fully and entirely satisfied, and the pledge contained in them entirely redeemed, by entering into the negotiation at Lisle. And as to that which was published after the negotiation at Lisle, it was not only not of the vague and unlimited nature, which the hon. gentleman described, but it was in truth more limited by circumstances, and more precise in the extent and duration of its obligation than the former. For what was the state of the circumstances under which that declaration was published? Lord Malmesbury had been empowered to offer the terms of peace at Lisle, so liberal, so advantageous to the enemy, that nothing, in fact, but the real and pressing necessity for peace which was felt in this country, could have justified the government in foregoing them; and that it was not unreasonably to be apprehended, that any favourable change in the circumstances of the country might induce the government to seize an opportunity of departing from them. Such, however, was not the intention or the policy of government. A favourable change had taken place in the circumstances of the country; for, soon after the breaking off of the conferences at Lisle, and the sending away of lord Malmesbury, it had pleased Providence to bless his majesty's arms with a signal victory over the fleet of one of his enemies. The effect of this victory was, to secure, in a great measure, the safety of the country, and to raise the spirits of the people certainly in a very considerable degree. But still the king's ministers thought peace upon the whole desirable; and feeling this, and apprehending, at the same time, that the enemy would naturally conclude that the advantage so recently gained must of necessity have raised our terms, they thought it expedient to give them to understand that such was not the case—that even after the victory of lord Duncan they were ready to make peace upon the same terms which they had offered before, and, for this purpose, the declaration was published. The enemy might have taken them at their word at the time: fortunately he did not. But was it to be argued, that such a declaration, made under such circumstances, and with such a view, was to be everlastingly binding? That because one victory, because a favourable change, in one particular, of the situation of this country, did not alter the opinion of ministers as to the preferableness of peace to war (a choice of evils, God knows, as such a peace must have been), and did not affect the moderation of their terms, therefore they were to be held for ever to the words, not the spirit, of their proposition; were never to be at liberty to vary their tone with the variation of circumstances, both in this country, and in the situation of the enemy, but were bound to be always forthcoming, when the enemy pleases to call upon them, and to make at all times the worst terms possible for Great Britain, because there had been a period when a peace, even on terms so bad, was thought preferable to the continuance of the war? Surely there was not common fairness, or reason, in such a mode of argument; nor would there be common sense in such a mode of conduct!

As little could it be argued, that the having treated with revolutionary France at all, precluded ministers for ever from considering the internal state of that country as a discouragement to negotiation. What! because they had already felt, in the abrupt and insulting termination of the negotiation at Lisle (of Paris he would say nothing), what it was to treat with a revolutionary government; were they, therefore, of course, bound to treat immediately and eagerly with every new government the instant that it presented itself to their view? Was the mere fact of an experiment having been tried, and having failed, of itself a sufficient inducement to try it again? Were the government bound to this, if circumstances continued the same, and afforded, therefore, only the same chance of success? And were they equally bound to it in case of a change? Was there now

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a change in the circumstances or dispositions of the enemy, which warranted the expectation that the chance of success would now be greater? And if there were so, how were they to ascertain it, but by that very examination and comparison of the present situation of France, and the French government, with that which had before baffled their endeavours after peace; which examination and comparison the hon. gentleman had warned the House not to pursue?

Whether or no any such fortunate and promising alteration had been effected in the principles and temper of France, by the alteration of form of government and of persons, was precisely the question upon which the government of this country had to make up its opinion, before it could safely, or prudently, or consistently, entertain any proposal for negotiation. It was precisely that upon which it was impossible to make up any rational opinion, until they should have seen trial of the new establishment; a trial only to be decided by what was so justly insisted upon in the official note returned in answer to general Buonaparté's letters to his majesty, "experience and the evidence of facts."

But this distrust of the new government the hon. gentleman professed to believe to be in a great measure effected, and to be put forward only in order to afford an opportunity for declaring the marked and exclusive predilection of ministers for the ancient monarchy of France; and nothing could, in the hon. gentleman's opinion, be more impolitic, as well as more outrageously insulting to the feelings of the people of France, than the avowal of a desire to see the ancient monarchy restored. Undoubtedly such a desire was plainly and distinctly avowed; and, for his part, Mr. Canning said, he was at a loss to conceive what there was in the avowal that could irritate the feelings of Frenchmen. If, indeed, it was possible to imagine, that there still existed in France a large body of sincere, bigotted, fanatical lovers of republicanism, of persons who gravely believed in the purity and perfection of the republican principle, as applicable, or as ever having been applied to the government of France, under any of its successive revolutions, who still looked with faith and hope to the preservation and propagation of their principles, and considered nothing but the return of monarchy as likely to oppose their progress, or diminish their influence and operation, if such a race of madmen yet were to be found, whose eyes and understandings, the whole series of tyrannies from Robespierre and Buonaparté had not been sufficient to open; with them, he must confess that the expression of a wish for the restoration of the old legitimate government might be unpopular; their feelings such a proposition might irritate. But, he confessed, he could not easily persuade himself that such a race of men could be very numerous either in France or elsewhere. And if, as was more probable, the general and prevailing feeling throughout France, was that of weariness and disgust at the scenes of horror and calamity through which they had passed; if they now began to see, with regret and compunction, that, after ten years of sufferings and of crimes, of miseries inflicted upon others, and heaped upon themselves, after wading through seas of blood in pursuit of the empty form of liberty which still eluded their grasp, the sole result of their endeavours to shake off the government, which they were once taught to think so oppressive, had been no other than the subjecting themselves to a tyranny ten thousand times more galling; that they had succeeded only in exchanging the sceptre for the sword; that, instead of eradicating monarchy, they had stripped it of all that made it venerable, and of all that made it useful, of all that recommended it in theory, and all that softened it in practice; had stripped it of its stability, its legitimacy, and its limitations. If such were now the reflexions of all thinking men in that unhappy country, what reason was there to apprehend that they would shrink from the mention of their ancient government? That they would withhold their homage from a known and mitigated monarchy, to pay it to a frightful and jealous usurpation? That they would hold sacred their allegiance to a shapeless mockery of royalty, with "the likeliness of a kingly crown" upon its head, and refuse it to that substantial and protective power, under which they have flourished for ages, in respect abroad and in happiness at home? Was it not rather to be presumed, that they had now began to look with anxious desire for a termination to their calamities, in such an order of things as alone could terminate them in peace and security? Was it not probable—was it not certain—did not every man who heard him, know

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from his own experience, that the first idea suggested by Buonaparté's successful usurpation, was, that it was a step to the restoration of monarchy? Was it not obvious to every person, that from the government of one man, to that of a lawful king, was a transition neither so strange nor so difficult, as from any of the more complicated constitutions which had risen and fallen in France since the abolition of the monarchy? And, even now, though to point out the pacific stages by which the change was to be brought about might be by no means easy, was there any human being who did not feel that monarchy was brought more within view than it had been at any period since the beginning of the revolution? That those who wished it felt it more confident in their hopes; that those who dreaded its return yet thought it more probable, and might be more ready to compromise with it: and that, therefore, to put the case of the re-establishment of monarchy as that in which peace would become easy and certain, was to specify not only the most desirable but the most probable termination of the war, and that which, according to all human calculation, might be most near at hand.

But an apprehension was expressed, that in stating the desire of this government for the restoration of monarchy in France, a pledge was given to the royalists that peace should never be made at all, until monarchy was retored. It was feared, that government were thus making common cause with the royalists, and implicating the fortunes of this country in the issue of a contest in which substantially it had no real concern. Not so: the language of the official note was guarded carefully in this point; and so little did it justify the conclusion that common cause was made with the royalists to the extent described, that in other comments upon the note, which he had seen, a directly contrary effect was stated as likely to be produced by it; namely, that the intimation of other possible cases in which peace might be made by this country with France, would prevent the royalist party from building any hope at all upon the good wishes of Great Britain. The truth, however, lay between both; and it might, perhaps, be sufficient to answer to both objections, that the royalists were not deceived as to what was the true intention of government, and that they were satisfied with it. The royalists of France, and the government of this country had undoubtedly a common object, but they had different degrees of interest in the attainment of it, and proportioned to those different degrees of interest might be the degrees of their respective exertions and perseverance in the pursuit. So far, however, as they were both to proceed, they might safely and beneficially proceed together. It was a partnership in which the royalists had necessarily embarked their whole fortune; this country, a part only; and the terms of the connexion resulting from these combined, but unequal interests, were distinctly understood. If we could bring the royalists through by the same efforts by which we were working for our own advantage, surely it was highly useful, and honourable, and humane, to do so: but we were not pledged to persevere beyond what we thought prudent on our own account; we might withdraw at any time, when our own objects were accomplished, or when we saw, or thought we saw, that they were unattainable, without greater risk than it appeared to us adviseab'e to incur: and we might withdraw without reproach, and without dishonesty. We had no share in bringing the royalists into the contest, though finding them at our side, we were bound in honour and humanity to assist them, as far as our ways lay together: but while we owed thus much to them, we did not, nor did they, forget that we owed all to ourselves.

Next, however, according to the honourable gentleman's arguments, it was to be considered that this country had, in fact, no interest whatever in the re-establishment of monarchy in France: nay, that it was rather an event to be looked at with jealousy and apprehension. This assertion, though he had heard of its being made and maintained in other places, Mr. Canning said, he could hardly believe to be made with seriousness. Good God! Had Great Britain, had the world no interest in the re-establishment of order, of a known, defined, understood, experienced, legitimate order of things, in the room of a system of disorder, anarchy, and impiety, not more afflicting to France, than it was incompatible, as had been proved by long and painful experience, with the security of every other government upon earth? Was it nothing to this country, looking to peace as its object, whether she should be able to conclude a peace on which she could rely, and under which

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she could repose with confidence; a peace which should bring with it the renewal of safe communication, of commercial intercourse, of reciprocal trust and benefit; or, whether she should only rest on her arms in hourly expectation of being again summoned to war, in defence of her dearest interests? And did the honourable gentleman suppose, that such a peace as was alone worth having, as alone could be maintained without all the cost, and more than all the dangers of war, could rest on any other grounds than the restoration of such an order of things in France as might ensure the return of credit and stability to the government, and of security for property and of honest industry, and commercial morality amongst the people?

The expression, therefore, of an anxious wish for the re-establishment of the French monarchy, did not appear to him to be either so dangerous in the effect that it might produce in France, nor so extravagant with respect to the interests of Great Britain. But here the honourable gentleman had taken a very extraordinary ground indeed; and in his zeal to combat the idea of restoring monarchy, he had far outstepped the rule of forbearance, with respect to the past conduct of France, which he had prescribed for those who differed from him upon the question, and had gone into a laboured dissertation on the dangers with which monarchy, in the House of Bourbon, had in old times threatened this country and all Europe. The mind of that man must be singularly constituted, who, living in such times as the present, could overlook all the dangers actually impending, and all those which had recently overwhelmed the world from the profligate aggressions and tyranny of republican France; and who yet trembled with apprehension at the recollection of the ambitious projects of Louis 14th. The honourable gentleman had referred to the projects of that monarch, which had threatened the independence of Europe, a hundred years ago; and had spoken of them in a tone which showed, that he thought the independence of Europe matter of concern, and the overweening ambition of France, matter of dread to this country: and he had spoken, in the manner which it deserved, of the stand made by king William in defence of the liberties of this country, and of Europe. He agreed with the honourable gentleman, in looking back with pride to that distinguished period of English history. He found in that period much to praise; wisdom and firmness in our councils, skill in our generals, valour in our armies: but he found nothing that delighted him more, or that he would rather recommend to the admiration of the honourable gentleman, and his friends, than the cordial support afforded by the Commons of Great Britain to their sovereign, in the prosecution of a war, carried on for the true interests, the honour and safety of their country, against the rapacious, insolent, and domineering ambition of France. [Mr. Canning here read an address of the House of Commons to king William, in the year 1696, the 8th year of the war, containing expressions of their determination to support his majesty to the utmost, "till he should be able to obtain by war, a safe and honourable peace."*] This example was, indeed, he said, worthy of being quoted, and worthy of all the praise bestowed upon the exertions of that reign, by the honourable gentleman. But, after all, what did the honourable gentleman gain to his argument, by referring to the days of Louis 14th, and by citing the precedent of the noble struggle maintained by this country, during the reign of king William, and his successor, against France? He reminded us, it was true, what were the efforts, and what were the sacrifices which the people of England had thought themselves bound to make in that contest. What was the inference? Why, that in a contest, incalculably more arduous, and involving in its issue interests infinitely more important, we should make, at least, equal efforts, and display, at least, equal perseverance? What was at any time the specific danger from the ambition of Louis 14th, that called forth all the energy of this country? First, generally, his unprincipled ambition; latterly, war was carried on against him because there was a danger that France would acquire an influence in the councils of Spain. An influence in the councils of Spain! Would to God such were the only danger that we had now to apprehend! Yet for this, the hon. gentleman thought war was justly and nobly carried on! And now—Oh! now, there was no reason, no pretext for carrying on war at all; no danger now of French influence in Spain!—France intermeddle in the concerns of Spain now! France command the treasures, dispose of the fleets, direct the policy of the

* See Vol. 5, p. 996.

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Spanish monarchy now! Not she; she did not presume to entertain projects so ambitious. Spain indeed! She had nothing to do with Spain; nor with Holland; nor with the Netherlands; nor with Switzerland; nor with Germany; nor with Italy (with Italy, God be thanked! not much); nor with Egypt. There was nothing now to fear from her power; nothing now to suspect from her intrigues; no danger to the balance of Europe; no hazard to the liberties, the religion, the constitutions of the several states and kingdoms of the world!

If, however, there were no reason for carrying on the war, it was not, therefore, the less necessary to inquire what possibility there was of making, and what chance for securing peace. And this was a question which unfortunately could not be agitated, without touching upon the second topic, which the hon. gentleman had prohibited, the personal character and conduct of the first consul of the French republic. On what ground, indeed, the honourable gentleman had thought himself warranted in precluding such a discussion, it was not easy to conceive. The discussion was not of our seeking. The first consul voluntarily forced himself upon our observation, in a way that made it impossible for us to turn aside, and to pretend not to see him. He told us plainly, that if we had to do with France at all, we must have to do with *him*, as concentering in his own person all that was stable, all that was authoritative, all that was responsible to foreign countries, in the new government of France. "If there be power in France, it is in *me*; if there be faith in France, in *me* must you look for it; if you make peace with France, *my* word, *my* character, *my* personal dispositions must be your sole, and sufficient security." Such was the language of the first consul to his majesty and his government; and when, in compliance with such an invitation, it was proposed to examine the foundation and validity of the only security thus offered to us, the hon. gentleman stepped in, and told the House, that such an examination was highly indecorous and unnecessary. It might give offence, it seemed, to the first consul; it was personal and indelicate; and he knew not what other terms of fine feeling were applied to it. Now, first, as to the fear of giving offence to the first consul himself, or to France: the hon. gentleman appeared to have very ill understood to what degree the temper of France was captious and irritable, in respect to the character of its existing, or expired governments; otherwise the hon. gentleman, with that delicacy which he professed to wish to observe, and that fear of offending, which dictated his warning to that side of the House, would not have indulged himself in many parts of the speech which he had made that day. For did the hon. gentleman imagine, that it was to their government of the present hour, or to that which Buonaparté had destroyed to erect this, or to that upon the ruins of which he had erected that which he had now destroyed, or to any one of the nine or ten immediately preceding governments, that France limited the privilege and sacredness, which made it almost blasphemy to condemn their proceedings? No such thing; the hon. gentleman, himself, in reviling the ambition of the ancient government of France, had as much sinned against the majesty of the French nation, as if he had presumed to traduce Brissot, or Robespierre, or any of the latter tyrants who swept them to the scaffold, and were swept by their successors to the same scaffold in their turn. The hon. gentleman has, indeed, committed his country most rashly, by such intemperate language against Louis 14th. Does he not know, or had he forgotten at the moment, that Rome was sacked and pillaged the other day, to avenge the manes of Vercengetorix (or some such name), a king of the Gauls, who flourished some time before Louis 14th, and whom Julius Cæsar was discovered to have aggrieved in a scandalous manner; and that to reclaim the trophies won from the Burgundians, was one of the pretexts alleged for the invasion of Switzerland? Let not, therefore, the hon. gentleman imagine, that the lapse of near a century, since the time of Louis 14th, would bar France, in her own good time, from avenging the wrongs done to his memory. France is not so forgetful, *nullum tempus occurrit*. Her vengeance might sleep, indeed; but opportunity would awaken it, and could we be caught as fairly off our guard, as weak and as inviting as Rome or as Switzerland (which might readily be the case if we would accept the counsel of the honourable gentleman opposite, and make peace, or armistice, without examination or delay), the honourable gentleman's abuse of Louis 14th, would be as good a plea as any other,

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for declaring war against us, and pursuing it to our ruin.

Forced, however, as we were, at all hazards, to sift pretty narrowly the character and conduct of the present ruler of France, it was some satisfaction that we had before-hand so much of what was the only testimony to be relied on, that of "experience and the evidence of facts," to guide our judgment, and aid our decision upon the subject. Mr. Canning said, he would not follow his right hon. friend through the detail of Buonaparté's conduct with regard to foreign states, in every transaction in which he had been engaged, from his first appearance at the head of the army of Italy, to his late disgraceful flight from the army of Egypt. The facts were before the House; they were fresh in every body's recollection. To these facts what testimony was opposed: first, the declaration of Buonaparté himself, swearing by himself, no doubt, as was the custom and the right of so transcendant a personage; and secondly, his minister, M. Talleyrand. Talleyrand, to be sure, was an admirable witness to character in matter of negotiation. Talleyrand certainly had proved, that he knew well how to make a treaty; but he seemed to be quite lost in admiration of Buonaparté's talents for keeping one. This was a thing of which he had no idea. "The old Directory and I," said Talleyrand, "know pretty well how to set about concluding a treaty; there was the American treaty, which all the world knows; the Portugal treaty too; both were managed cleverly enough in the making; but as to the keeping them, that is quite another thing. There, indeed, we had no skill, nor talent: but here, here is a man, who keeps treaties as well as makes them; a perfect phænomenon in the diplomacy of France." Such was the testimony that Talleyrand could furnish on behalf of Buonaparté. For that which Buonaparté could give in favour of himself, it fortunately was not necessary to rest on conjecture or inference. Fortunately the chance of war had thrown into our hands documents, of which the authenticity could not be questioned, and in which the characters of fraud, perjury, treachery, and deliberate breach of faith, were written in Buonaparté's own hand against himself. He alluded to the letters lately intercepted on their passage from Egypt.

And here he must take some notice of the remarks of the hon. gentleman, and of those which he understood had been made in other places on the publication of those letters. It had been argued, that there was something base and illiberal, something contrary to the rights of mitigated war, and to the practice of civilized nations, in publishing letters of an enemy, which the chance of war had thrown into our hands. He would not enter into the theory of this question, because, being a question of practical policy, it could be much better settled by a reference to the conduct of the most civilized countries in their best times. He apprehended the hon. gentlemen opposite would not dispute the claim of their own country (for it was the conduct of Great Britain that he meant to quote) to the qualification which he had bestowed upon it: and he was confident that they would agree with him as to his character of the particular period of our history, to which he referred; for it was one which they were themselves extremely fond of citing with expressions of high commendation, for reasons sufficiently obvious; it was the year 1759, the period of the glorious war carried on under the administration of the father of his right hon. friend who sat beside him (Mr. Pitt). The paper which he held in his hand, contained an extract from the London Gazette, from Tuesday, August 14, to Saturday, August 18, 1759. "Among the papers which were taken at Detmold on the 5th instant, by his majesty's light troops, an original letter is found from the marshal duc de Belleisle, to marshal Contades, dated, Versailles, July 23rd, 1759, in which there is the following passage." Then followed a passage extracted from the letter, with which it was not necessary to trouble the House. In the London Gazette Extraordinary, of Friday, October 12, in the same year, were published some intercepted letters taken in the East Indies, which were still more in point, from the substance of their contents, as well as from the precedent of publication. The first was, "Translation of an Intercepted Letter from M. Lally to M. Lerpit." Another was, "Translation of a Letter intercepted going from Pondicherry to Masulipatam:" In which there were some passages so curious, when compared with those letters from Egypt, which have lately been published, that he believed the House would forgive

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him, if he took up a few minutes of their time in reading a part of it to them; it was as follows: "Shall I mention to you our unfortunate expedition to Tanjore? Bad news is interesting, but painful to the writer . . . The army has suffered greatly from hunger, thirst, watching, and fatigue . . . . Poor French! What a situation are we in! What projects we thought ourselves capable of executing, and how are we disappointed! . . . I pity our general. He must be extremely embarrassed, notwithstanding his extensive genius, without money or fleet; his troops very discontented, his reputation declining . . . . What will become of us? . . . . They say M. de Busi is coming. Let him make haste. Let him bring men, and especially money, without which he will only increase our misery. The country, being ruined, scarce affords us any provisions . . . . . Above twenty officers of different corps have gone on board the fleet. If M. Lally had given permission to depart, the greatest part of them would have embarked: so greatly are these gentlemen disgusted with their situation!" . . . . . Would not any person who heard this, without being told from whence it came, be persuaded that it was, in fact one of the late interceptions from Egypt; when, at least as much as at Pondicherry in 1759, the army have reason to be "disgusted with their situation." . . . . . Was there any longer any doubt as to the strict precedented propriety of availing ourselves of every information of such a sort, which came into our power? Or would a stand now be made (it was very possible) that against France, and especially against Buonaparté himself, such an advantage was ungenerous? Such, perhaps, might be the argument; for he had heard that in another place it had been gravely declared, that the publisher of Buonaparté's letters must have a worse heart than the writer of them. These were harsh words; but when he looked a little farther, and found the same orator arguing, that the scarcity proceeded from the war, he had felt that an imputation, however severe, from such an arguer was not much to be regarded. But, in truth, did Buonaparté merit for the goodness of his heart, a special exemption from the fair advantages arising out of the fortune of war? Had he so conducted himself as to deserve such a compliment? Perhaps an extract which he would take the liberty to read from the Moniteur of the 19th Pluviose, 5th year (some time in January, 1797), would settle this point, as completely as the London Gazette had settled the other. "Copy of a Letter from General Buonaparté, Commander in Chief of the Army of Italy, to the Executive Directory. Verona, 1 Pluviose, 5th year. Citizens Directors; You will find enclosed some intercepted letters, which are extremely interesting; as you will see in them the obstinate bad faith of the court of Rome." Then followed the publication at length of a letter from the cardinal secretary of state at Rome, to M. Albani (the nuncio) at Vienna; and the House would remember that Rome was not then actually at war with the French republic. And this was the man entitled to peculiar delicacy, against whom the just rights of war ought not to be enforced!

But in defiance of the proofs arising out of Buonaparté's own testimony, thus fortunately produced against himself, and in contradiction to all that had been stated by his right hon. friend, the hon. gentleman thought it sufficient to maintain that Buonaparté had not in point of fact violated the treaty of Campo Formio. Undoubtedly, the hon. gentleman was right. Buonaparté did not violate the treaty of Campo Formio. But what then? What ground for triumph did the hon. gentleman find in this concession? The hon. gentleman must have mistaken his right hon. friend's meaning, if he supposed that the whole of his argument was liable to be overthrown by the production of a single instance of a treaty not broken by Buonaparté. If, indeed, his right hon. friend had asserted that France had never broken a treaty without Buonaparté; if the tenor of his argument had been that Buonaparté was a necessary ingredient in every breach of treaty; then, to be sure, to find one which had been broken by France without his agency, might be matter of high controversial triumph. But his right hon. friend had asserted no such thing. He had merely asserted that Buonaparté had never kept a treaty on his part; and that France on her's had left none unviolated; but that she had employed Buonaparté to violate them all, that she had been so poor in resources as to be able to find but one instrument for such complicated and multiplied acts of wickedness, it had never entered into his right hon. friend's head to assert.—He was, however, very glad that the hon. gentleman had re-

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called the attention of the House to the treaty of Campo Formio; because, though not affording an instance of breach of treaty on the part of Buonaparté, it was much more material to be considered as affording the instance to which Buonaparté himself referred with so much confidence, of the dispositions already manifested by him, not for peace simply, but for a general pacification. The first consul, in his letter to his majesty, had declared, that his majesty "could only see in this overture his personal desire to contribute for the second time, to a general pacification." Talleyrand, in his reply to lord Grenville's note, had insisted upon the same topic, and the hon. gentleman on the other side, who took all that Buonaparté and Talleyrand said for gospel, had not been slow in expressing his persuasion, that it was for a general pacification that treaty was now proposed. Now, when a man talked of doing a thing for the *second* time, he luckily gave some clue for finding his real meaning; for as much as to form some idea how he would do it in the *second* time, it was only necessary to look back, and see how he had done it the *first*. In this point of view the treaty of Campo Formio did indeed afford an admirable test of Buonaparté's notions of general pacification. At the time when the treaty of Campo Formio was negociated, the powers still at war with France, beside Austria, were Great Britain, and as the ally of Great Britain, Portugal. The preliminaries of Leoben were signed by Buonaparté, in April 1797. The treaty of Campo Formio, founded on these preliminaries (he would not here distract the attention of the House by noticing the wide departure in the treaty from the preliminaries signed at Leoben, nor by remarking on the plea by which that departure was defended on the part of France, namely, that in framing those preliminaries, advantage had been taken of the generosity of the French republic—these were shades of faithlessness scarce worth mentioning), the treaty of Campo Formio was concluded in the course of the summer. In the same summer Great Britain proposed to treat for peace; and the conferences at Lisle were opened. Portugal also, besides that she was included in the proposals of Great Britain, opened a separate treaty for herself. What then was the consequence? Peace made with Austria, England and Portugal, the only remaining powers at war, actually engaged in negotiation;—one should have imagined that the work of general pacification would have gone smoothly on; and that Buonaparté, whose interest was paramount in France at that moment, might easily have obtained his heart's desire. But no—the revolution of the 4th of September took place;—a revolution which, be it remarked, could not be brought about without the consent of Buonaparté, which Barras, then the intimate friend and patron of Buonaparté, planned, which Augereau was sent from Buonaparté's army to Paris to conduct, and therewith ended the negotiations at Lisle, and the treaty with Portugal; the British minister was dismissed, the Portuguese minister imprisoned;—and threats of renewed and interminable war, were the only answers made to the persevering offers of new negotiation on the part of this country. Such was the conduct and success of Buonaparté's first fond attempt at general pacification; and lest any doubt should be entertained of his perfect satisfaction in the issue, he shortly after pursued his favourite plan of peace, by conducting an army, destined against the British possessions in the East, into Egypt, the territory of a partial and friendly power; and thus both secured the continuance of the war with England, and wantonly added a new enemy to the list of the enemies of France.

If such was the state of the transaction to which we were so confidently referred, as containing undoubted proofs of the dispositions avowed by the first consul, and as affording the precedent which he meant to follow in the negotiation now proposed to us—whatever advantage we might have to accuse ourselves of having lost by refusing to listen to his overtures, was it reasonable to suppose, that of all things in the world, we had thrown away an opportunity of general pacification? was it not rather probable, was it not evident, that as, in the former instance, having detached Austria from the coalition, the whole force of France was bent against the interests of this country; so now it was intended merely to make sure of our inactivity by entangling us in negotiation, in order that the undivided efforts of the government of France might be directed against the court of Vienna?—It was our turn now to have a truce, while the power of Austria should be exhausted; as Austria had

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formerly been allowed to breathe, while the full vengeance of France was let loose against Great Britain:—and as, when that experiment had been tried, Austria was speedily forced back into the war—what right had we to flatter ourselves that our repose would have been permitted to be more secure, or of longer continuance?

There remained another consideration personal to the first consul, which it was impossible to leave wholly out of the question; and this was the stability of government; without which, it was plain, that there could be no security for any peace which we might conclude with him at the present moment. Upon this point it could not be necessary to say much. Every probability, every presumption, was obviously against the permanence of a power, which rested on none of the known and intelligent principles, on which a government had ever yet been supported;—a power possessed by republicans, which was built upon the wreck and ruins of every principle of freedom; a power professing to emanate from the people, which no one class or description of the people had either a share in creating, or an interest in preserving; a despotism without the sanction of prescription, or the mitigation of established laws, or usages, or manners; a military despotism proposing to maintain itself by universal peace: these were anomalies, which it became those gentlemen to explain, and to reconcile to common understandings; to reconcile, if they could, with past experience, or with any reasonable theory, when they contended for the stability of the new government in France; or was there some high and mysterious principle of preservation, such as the vulgar and uninitiated could not comprehend, which would watch over the destinies of Buonaparté? was it, that owing his crown, as Macbeth was described to owe his, to "fate and metaphysical aid;"—it was expected that the "metaphysical aid" of Sieyes, who had helped him to the crown, would be able, under all chances, to keep it safe upon his head? that there was some charm contrived by that "weird" Abbé, which would baffle all combinations that "man of woman born could bring against him?"

But after exhausting all the inducements to immediate peace, the hon. gentleman had endeavoured to alarm the House by prophecies of the dangers and disasters to be expected from the prosecution of the war. On this point, as it was matter upon which much less conviction could be attained by argument, he should not detain the House long. He would only observe, in passing, that when among those dangers the hon. gentleman enumerated so confidently the desertion of our allies, and when he inferred the almost certainty of this desertion from a review of the past conduct of these powers, whom he had stigmatised with every opprobrious epithet that his imagination could suggest to him, he could not help being surprised, that the hon. gentleman should not have reflected, that such a proceeding suited very ill with the recommendation which he had so often inculcated, in the course of his speech, to take no retrospect, and to abstain from invective. He wondered that it did not occur to him, that if there was much danger of irritating the enemy by intemperate language in that House, it was not wholly immaterial to consider whether similar language might not disgust our allies. Perhaps the hon. gentleman, thinking their dereliction of us so sure, one time or other, saw no harm in quickening it; and would have us get rid of them as soon as we could. But this policy seemed to him to be a little questionable. If a general commanding an army composed of many different nations, were to be told, that at a certain period, a month hence, perhaps, the several contingents of the different powers would be recalled; if he were told this when in presence of the enemy; and if his informer were to add, that he advised him, therefore, instantly to disband his forces himself, and to make what terms he could for his own safety: the advice, it seemed to him, was not such as the general would most prudently follow; he would rather conclude that no time, therefore, was to be lost, no exertion spared, to make the utmost advantage of the combination of his whole force while it yet continued unbroken.

But with respect to the probability of such an event as the hon. gentleman foretold, and with respect to the dreadful disgraces and calamities which were to follow it, he would not trespass upon the patience of the House (especially considering who were to follow him in the debate) by opposing his calculations and predictions to those of the hon. gentleman. It was sufficient for the vote of that night, if government should be allowed to have acted right under the actual circum-

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stances of the case. It would be indeed hazardous, to foretell the successes of the campaign. But it was some comfort to reflect that the campaign which was just closed, though at its close not in every respect so triumphant as might have been wished, and for a time expected, was yet, upon the whole, one of the most brilliant that history records; so much had been done in that campaign, that if any body at its outset had ventured to anticipate its progress and conclusion, such as they have in fact proved to be, he would have been considered as sanguine almost to madness. He, for his part, did not at present see in the state either of France, or of the powers at war with her, any thing to warrant the tone of despondency, which the hon. gentleman assumed: and to say the truth, when he recollected the many unfulfilled predictions of evil, which had come from the bench on which the hon. gentleman sat, he was not disposed to be much cast down by it. The last time that the tripod of prophecy had been brought into that House, he remembered (it was in the spring of 1797), the House were solemnly warned that there was not "three weeks regular government" remaining to the country. That period was long past; and, God be thanked, the evils of anarchy had not yet fallen upon them. He doubted not that it was owing to our own exertions that we were yet safe; and if we were true to ourselves, we had yet abundant means to provide for the continuance of our safety.

Mr. *Erskine* said, that the House was assembled upon a most momentous occasion: they were assembled upon a new æra in the war; and without, for the moment, annexing any epithet to it, or adverting to its unparalleled calamities, it could not be denied that a new æra, in any possible war, which led to a nearer prospect of peace, was a most critical and auspicious period. His majesty's ministers had undoubtedly considered the present proposition of the French republic as by no means fit to be rejected, under the sanction of the former determinations of the House; because, if they had so considered it, they would not have advised the king to ask their opinion; no responsibility could have been attached to ministers for acting upon the former councils of parliament; more especially as the answer sent to the proposition from thence was strictly within the province of the executive government, in the exercise of which (except in doubtful and momentous cases), ministers were not only not bound to ask a sanction for their proceedings, but it was not the practice of the constitution to come to the Lords and Commons for advice, much less in a case where they had already delivered opinion after opinion for years together. There existed, therefore, on the confession of ministers themselves, a new æra in the war, on which parliament was called to deliberate, and to originate an opinion.

The advice which the House was called upon to deliver to his majesty had been by no means correctly stated by the right hon. secretary, who had proposed the address; the advice and opinion desired by his majesty could only be found in his gracious message to the House, which had not only not been pursued in the statement of the right hon. secretary, but had been as if it were studiously departed from.—The question was not, whether the king should have yielded to an immediate armistice, nor, whether he should have at once opened a negotiation without consulting with his allies; much less on what terms, or subject to what qualifications a pacific proposition should have been taken into consideration, or finally adopted; but, whether the House could possibly fulfil his majesty's expectation, as expressed in his message, by signifying its approbation of the specific answer which had been sent? Whether the House of Commons could say, *in the face of a suffering nation and a desolated world*, that a lofty, imperious, declamatory, insulting answer, to a proposition professing peace and conciliation, was the answer which ought to have been sent to France, or to any human government? Whether this was really the question for the consideration of the House upon the king's message, was neither matter of argument nor opinion, but matter of fact:—recourse could only be had to the message itself, which he would read: "His majesty has thought proper, on this occasion, to direct that there should be laid before the House, copies of communications recently received from the enemy, and of the answers which have been returned thereto, by his majesty's command. His majesty entertains the fullest confidence, that those answers will appear to this House to have been conformable to that line of conduct which was required from his majesty on this occasion, by his regard to all the most important interests of his dominions."

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It was plain, therefore, that they were called upon not to advise his majesty upon the fitness of an armistice, or of an immediate negotiation, but to ratify, or to condemn, the policy and fitness of the specific answer which ministers, upon their own authority, had previously sent to France. —No materials had been laid before the House to enable it to judge of the fitness of an immediate armistice, or even of an unqualified acceptance of an immediate negotiation; because the one and the other might depend upon our engagements with other countries, and the actual position of the war.—But to judge of the unfitness of the answer, the answer itself furnished a sufficient foundation; because, under no circumstances, and at no time, could such an answer be either wise or decent, from the ministers of any nation, to any possible profession of conciliation and peace.—Mr. Erskine said, that so far, therefore, from consenting to the address which the secretary of state had proposed to them, he was perfectly prepared to tell the king, that the answer, which he expected to be approved of by the House, was such *as no reasonable men ought to approve;* because, without necessity, it was rash, insolent, and provoking. Whether ministers ought at once to have acceded to the propositions made to them, or in what manner they ought to have qualified, or even evaded them, as wise policy might have dictated, his majesty, as he had already observed, had not laid before the House materials for judging; neither did he (Mr. Erskine) mean so far to assume the character of a statesman, as to give an opinion on such points, above all without facts to go upon: but though he might not be able, so circumstanced, to determine what answer might have been *right*, he could, without the possibility of being mistaken, pronounce that the answer given was *odiously and absurdly wrong*.—As a vindication of the war, it was loose, and, in some parts, unfounded; but as an answer to a pacific proposition, it was dangerous as a precedent to the universal interests of mankind: it rejected the very idea of peace, as if peace were a curse, and the demand of negotiation an insult; and held fast to war, as if war were an inseparable adjunct to the prosperity of nations. This was no figure; because every end of wise policy (if wise policy had even imperiously dictated the continuance of war) might have been reconciled by a milder answer. The king might have said, "That he saw with satisfaction the pacific disposition of the new government of France, and would not question its sincerity, but that the various aggressions and injuries of her past governments had involved the question of peace or war in many complicated considerations: that his majesty had been obliged to combine with other nations for the security of his dominions, and the peace and order of Europe; that, so circumstanced, he could neither treat separately, nor in conjunction with his allies, without consultation and abundant consideration; but that his majesty would embrace the earliest occasion to return a more detailed answer to the proposition of the French republic."—Mr. Erskine did not at all mean to assert, that what he had hastily stated as a possible answer, would have been the proper one to have returned; nor was he prepared to say what would have been the fittest to adopt: his judgment was confined to a positive, unequivocal censure of the answer which, had been sent, and of every other answer which, by bombast and petulant declamation, without any distinct meaning, seemed to have no other end or object than to remove peace to an incalculable distance. —The answer appeared to him to have, most unadvisedly, put in issue the causes of the war, which the two nations could never, in the nature of things, be brought to agree upon, and which were wholly irrelevant to the question of a peace, which the groans and sufferings of the world so loudly and feelingly demanded.—Whether England or France was the aggressor in the war could no longer be debated in that House with any possible effect, though posterity would sit in awful and impartial judgment on the question.—It was a subject on which he had delivered an opinion, and which he had seen no reason to depart from; but he should have thought it the height of impertinence and folly to have come down to the House, expecting to produce any conviction on that subject, after the character and consistency of the House had been so long and so irretrievably pledged, both by its declarations and its conduct, for nine years together.

In bringing, therefore, before the House its different acts in the progress of the war, he did not call upon them to reverse their former judgments, by the censure which he called on them to pronounce on the answer to the proposals from France, but only to point out to them, that the

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same fatality of resisting peace, not upon specific injuries and complaints, but upon general and undefined objections to the state and condition and views of France, had characterised the war from the beginning; had been, indeed, the cause of it; and, if persisted in by the sanction of the measure in question, would lead to fruitless and endless hostility. The French revolution was undoubtedly in its beginning a great and awful event, which could not but extend its influence more or less to other nations. So mighty a fabric of despotism and superstition, after having endured for ages, could not fall to the ground without a concussion which the whole earth would feel; but the evil of such a revolution, if any there ever was to other nations, was only to be averted by cautious internal policy, and not by external war; unless it became impossible, from actual and not speculative aggression, to maintain the relations of peace. The question was not whether the original or the present effects of the French revolution were beneficial or dangerous, but what was our own policy and duty, as connected with their existence. The American revolution, when it first broke out, was inveighed against by its opponents in the same extravagant and useless declamations: but a person who had long flourished in eloquence within these walls, had given the only fit answer to complaints of revolutions in other countries. "The question," said Mr. Burke, in moving his conciliation with America, "is not whether this condition of human affairs deserves praise or blame; but, What, in God's name, are you to do with it?" Had ministers yet been able by eight years invective in this House to mitigate the evils of the French revolution? On the contrary, after in a manner creating the worst of them, they had prevented them from subsiding, and provoked most of the excesses which now furnished the pretexts of perpetual and unavailing war.

When France cut off her most unfortunate prince, and established her first republic, she had an ambassador at our court; here was here, indeed, as the French king's ambassador, but he presented letters of credence from the first republic, with the most unqualified professions of respect and friendship. Mr. Erskine did not enter into their sincerity, because they were never tried: they were not only respectful in form, but the interest of France was an argument at least that they were not a fraud upon England. It had been said, that at that moment the aggressions of France were just causes of war. He had denied that formerly; he now denied it again; though he insisted that it was foreign to the just consideration of the subject before the House. If France had been guilty of aggressions, why did not England complain of these aggressions, and dismiss the ambassador on refusal of satisfaction? Not a syllable of complaint was ever uttered against France, capable of being adjusted by negotiation. On the contrary, when Louis 16th before his death, most feelingly and earnestly beseeched our mediation with the continental powers that threatened the tranquillity of France, we positively refused our mediation: and, on his death, we dismissed the ambassador accredited by the republic, for no other avowed reason than that France had tried and executed her king. What was that to England as a cause of war? If France, at that time, was engaged in projects inconsistent with peace, why were they not stated? If any specific objections exist to peace at this moment, why are they not now stated, and made the subject of negotiation or war? But then, as now, war was provoked and peace rejected upon general and unjustifiable objections—upon speculative dangers to religion and government—which, supposing them to have existed with all their imaginary consequences, were more likely to be increased than diminished by the fury and bitterness of war. M. Chauvelin, with the olive-branch in his hand, from the first republic of France, was sent out of the country, on twenty-four hours notice, not for any thing France was charged to have done as a national aggression towards this country, or other powers of Europe, but because France had beheaded her king.

On the 24th of January 1792, the king, by his secretary of state, had most unfortunately been advised to declare to M. Chauvelin, that, after such an event (referring to the execution of the king at Paris), "His majesty could not permit his residence any longer in England:" And, in the communication of this dismission to the two Houses of Parliament, in a few days afterwards, it was in terms expressed to be "On account of the late atrocious act perpetrated at Paris." The question, therefore, was not whether

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France had at that time been guilty of aggressions which might have justified war, but whether these aggressions had been complained of or acted upon, as the causes of hostilities, which negotiation might have adjusted; and whether, on the contrary, a pretext for war had not been furnished to France by dismission of her ambassador, for a cause which it was impossible to reconcile either with prudence or the law of nations. At that time ministers were repeatedly implored, from this side of the House, not to invite war upon principles which made peace dependent, in a great measure, upon systems and forms of government, and not upon the conduct of nations; upon theories, which could not be changed, instead of aggressions, which might be adjusted or corrected. At this period, and for a long time afterwards, France had a strong interest in peace: she had not extended her conquests, and her internal security was doubtful: unfortunately we suffered these auspicious periods to pass away, and instead of negotiating a peace, with confederated and unexhausted nations in our train, by a distinct detail of the aggressions we had to complain of, and of the securities which they entitled us to demand for England and for Europe; ministers, for two years together (though repeatedly warned of the impending consequences), declared France to be incapable of the relations of amity, and left her to feel and to act towards other nations, as other nations professed to feel and to act towards her. Europe had combined to extinguish France, and to place her without the pale of social community: France in her turn acted towards Europe on the same principles; desolated and ravaged whatever territories she occupied, and spread her conquests everywhere with the unexampled rapidity we have witnessed. What other consequences had ministers to expect? Was it imagined that a powerful nation, so surrounded, would act merely on the defensive, or, that in the midst of a revolution, which the confederacy of nations had rendered terrible, the rights of nations would be respected? No; we gave the different French governments, by our conduct, a pretext for jealousy of every other European state, and, in a manner, goaded her on to the accomplishment of all the conquests which had since been the subject of just lamentation and complaint; the confederacy of nations which Great Britain kept up against her, obliged her to maintain mighty armies in her defence: but such a war could not be long defensive—Defence was often only practicable by the boldness of invasion; and the armies of France, which other nations had, in a manner, created, were turned loose to feed upon them. Ambitious projects, not, perhaps, originally contemplated, followed their steps, and the world was changed with portentous violence, because the ministers of Great Britain had resolved that, if it changed at all, it should revert to establishments which had reached their period and expired.

Mr. Erskine then said, that what he wished principally to impress upon the House, as connected with their present deliberations, and as a caution not to let slip the present auspicious period, was, that when ministers at various periods during the war, had been pressed not to repel peace by general objections to the capacity of France to maintain the relations of amity, they had, by persisting in that irrational system, produced the very evils which the war was entered upon to avert. Our enemies uniformly increased in strength, keeping pace on their side with the hostile mind on ours, and which every day became more severe and unrelenting. In this manner we conducted ourselves till Holland was overrun; the Netherlands annexed to the republic; our principal allies detached from the confederacy; some of them connected in alliance with the enemy; and, what was worse than all, schemes of extension and aggrandizement avowed and acted upon, which not only had not existed before the war, but which the war had absolutely created; since, even after the first provocation, by the dismission of Chauvelin, and even after repeated refusals to consider France as a civilized nation, she did not set up her pretensions of boundary: nor begin her career of conquest, until confederated Europe had furnished her with the pretext, at least, of concealing her ambition under the cover of maintaining her government and securing its tranquillity and independence.—Mr. Erskine said, that the accumulated evils of procrastination on such a subject, and upon such principles, were not truths to be maintained by arguments or proofs, but had been confessed by ministers themselves by something more than words—by their own conduct; for, no sooner had the French republic been re-organized in

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1795, on the ruins of Robespierre's tyranny, and that constitution established which had been lately overthrown, than ministers of their own accord, without any pacific proposition from France, such as they had received at this moment, advised his majesty to inform parliament, "that the crisis depending at the beginning of that session, had led to such a state of things as enabled his majesty to meet any disposition to negotiation on the part of the enemy, on just and reasonable terms." How his majesty was to meet any such disposition from a nation which lay under a parliamentary ban of incapacity from England, never reversed by any declaration to that country, and which France could never consider as reversed by the king of Great Britain's declaration to his own parliament without communication to her, it was not easy to conceive. That consideration was then pressed on ministers to urge them to take an active step in the important work of peace; but whether they were right or wrong in not going farther, was not the question of to-night. He desired to ask the House, how it was possible, consistently with this declaration of his majesty, in 1795, which had received the sanction of the House, for ministers to send such an insulting answer to the present proposition of peace, and to ask our approbation of it? In 1795, without any pacific proposition from France, his majesty had professed himself open to receive one: at that period the new government of France was not above a month old, a government not creating itself, like the present, over a people tired of theories, and wearied with the inevitable consequences of popular convulsions, but established at a time when the spirit of democracy, which had been made the very pretext of all our own alarms, and of the incapacity of France, as a social government, was yet at its very height. At that time, too, the alarm in England. from the probable contagion of French principles, by the intercourses of peace, was not only the favourite theme of ministers, but was made the foundation of a system, by which some of our most essential liberties were abridged or suspended—The nation was stated to be full of plots, and Ireland was known to be on the brink of destruction: yet, at that moment, when, to add to the statement, near two hundred millions, since wrung from the people, remained unexhausted for the resources of war, ministers invited the infant, democratic, Jacobin, regicide, republic of France to propose a peace. On what possible principle, then, could the same House of Commons which sanctioned that proceeding, when no peace was offered, when no pacific spirit had even in profession been manifested, when France was in the very meridian of her democracy, and in the full career of her desolating conquests, on what possible principle could the same House of Commons approve of the answer which, in the present state of things, had been sent? The danger from France was now greatly diminished, because the resistless fury of that popular spirit, which had been the uniform topic of declamation, had not only subsided, from time and expansion, but was curbed, or rather extinguished, by the forms of the new government, which invited us to peace.—If sincerity in a foreign government was a thing which could ever be correctly estimated or acted on, as a basis for listening to, or rejecting peace, there was more reason now than formerly for considering that Buonaparté was sincere. Surrounded with perils; at the head of an untried government—menaced by a great confederacy, of which England was the grand prop and director—compelled to press heavily upon the resources of an exhausted people, whose power of renovating riches and prosperity were suspended by war—it was his interest undoubtedly to be at peace with England: but though it was thus his interest to negotiate, it might be no less the interest of this country to accept of it.

If Buonaparté found that his interests was served by an arrangement with England, the same interests would lead him to continue it.—Looking to himself, and to his own power, he would make national sacrifices to preserve tranquillity, and England would thus acquire an additional influence in the scale of Europe; because no man in his senses, in the circumstances of Buonaparté, at this moment, having once reconciled, by wise policy, so mighty a power as Great Britain, would run the risk of oversetting his own authority, by throwing her back again into the war, without the utmost and most unlooked-for provocations. The whole argument, therefore, was reduced to this; that because France was disposed to peace, we ought not.—But no maxim could be more false, than that the policy of a nation was to be collected by resisting whatever the

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policy of an antagonist power had suggested: it was not true in the arrangements of commerce, or in the progress of riches and improvement; nor, indeed, in any thing else. The interests of nations were, for the most part, reciprocal; and the interest of peace, to all nations, was an interest perpetual and universal. If democracy was the evil, and the contagion of it a well-founded apprehension, surely that apprehension was better founded in 1795 than at present: the popular societies, which at the former period had occasioned so much alarm, could not now reorganize themselves after the pattern of the French assemblies; nor could the English multitude be misled by the view of a dominion exercised in France by the visible authority of the people. Our own country was also in a different situation; since, without admitting it to have been, in 1795, in the state which ministers then represented it—still it was different. So mighty an event as the French revolution, could not but affect and agitate the human mind on the subject of government *every where;* and that agitation undoubtedly produced a strong attention to the abuses of our own: but no man could assert, that any such spirit, whether it was good or evil, existed at this moment; and the supposed existence of it formerly, had enabled government to arm the whole nation, and to place it in the most absolute state of internal security. The sword was in the hand of the higher and middle orders of the people; and the domestic dangers which had been always held up as an argument against peace, were, in our present condition, wholly and permanently removed. Mr. Erskine farther said, that this disposition, or rather conduct of ministers, in 1795, was not single or transitory: they continued from that period up to their present refusal to negotiate, to act upon the same principle: they continued to declare themselves ready to negotiate, and a year afterwards, viz. in November, 1796, actually sent lord Malmesbury to Paris to propose a peace. At this period, not a syllable was insinuated of the danger of a peace with France, or of incapacity in her rulers, to maintain its relations.—No difficulties were then opposed by ministers on the pretexts which had existed formerly, and which have been revived to-day: on the contrary, the negotiation went off upon a point of difference in regard to *terms;* it broke off upon our insisting on the restoration of Belgium as the *sine qua non.* He had before him lord Malmesbury's letter to lord Grenville, which would bring it to the memory of the House: "You then persist," said M. Delacroix, in applying this principle to Belgium, "I answered, most certainly: and I should not deal fairly with you if I hesitated to declare in the outset of the negotiation, that on this point you must entertain no expectation that his majesty will relax, or ever consent to see Belgium a part of France." And afterwards he says: "M. Delacroix again asked me, whether in his report he was to state the disuniting Belgium as a *sine qua non,* from which his majesty would not depart; I replied, it most certainly was a *sine qua non,* from which his majesty would not depart." And again, in the very next paragraph: "M. Delacroix repeated his concern at the peremptory way in which I made this assertion; and asked, whether it would admit of no modification? I replied, if France could, in a *contre projet,* point out a practicable and adequate one, still keeping in view, that the Netherlands must not be French, or likely again to fall into the hands of France, such a proposal might certainly be taken into consideration."

Here, then, was a negotiation entered upon without objection or reserve; and broken off, not upon general incapacities to preserve the relations of amity, but upon specific differences. The termination of this negotiation read an awful lesson to the House. At that moment France had not a soldier nor a foot of land in Italy; and a hundred and fifty millions of British property existed, which had since been spent upon war—Supposing all other points were capable of being adjusted, should we now insist on Belgium? Good God! had not ministers themselves reminded us this very night, that in a few months afterwards, on the second mission of lord Malmesbury, their *sine qua non* of the restoration of Belgium had been retracted, and that France broke off the negotiation upon other pretences?—She did so undoubtedly; but that was another awful warning against procrastination.—Her position was changed; her spirit was altered; her ambition was inflamed; her views were extended; she was fired with the prospect of dominion and conquest; and the consequences were but too visible in the desolation of the earth which had ensued. When nations are provoked,

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security is not long the measure of their activity; and when they cannot exist without mighty armies, they must feed and employ them beyond their own frontiers, in the territories of other nations. He never meant to vindicate the conduct of France in the termination of the second negotiation; she showed, undoubtedly, no disposition to peace; and that aversion, on her part, gave great strength to ministers, from the necessity of exertion on the part of this country: but for the argument of to-night, nothing could be more fatal to ministers than that admission; because, for the very same reason, and upon the same unalterable principles, our aversion to peace at this moment would consolidate and increase the power of the present rulers of France.

But ministers seemed to be so aware, that the inconsistency of their conduct, in being for years negotiating, and now suddenly refusing to negotiate, would be insisted upon to-night from this side of the House, that the secretary of state had himself anticipated the objection, and endeavoured to obviate it (a thing not even attempted in another place.) They were impelled, it seems, to negociate from the general wishes of the people; and they yielded to them, though they saw considerable danger in the success; this was more than he expected.—Though it did not amount to a confession of insincerity, it amounted, in his mind, to a justification of it, if it had existed; because he could well conceive conjunctures, in which, when the current of temporary opinion ran strongly against a system which ministers had, from principle and opinion, adopted, they might rather seem to give way to the public disposition, than really to act upon it with energy, and in earnest, against the dictates of their own judgments, and the prosecution of their own systems. This course, however, could not be pursued without great management: and the sincerity of statesmen, therefore, in the government of kingdoms, or in their transactions with foreign nations, could not be candidly assimilated to the truth and sincerity of private men. He could not, therefore, believe that ministers put forth all their strength and zeal to forward negotiations, from the very success of which they apprehended so much danger: nevertheless, when their insincerity, at the former periods of the war, was urged against them in argument, no argument had ever been repelled by them with more apparent indignation; yet now, when they could no longer support even the colour of consistency, in rejecting the present proposition of peace, which they had before themselves incited, they changed their ground entirely, and almost admitted that their former negotiations had been forced on them, and that their failures had been rather an advantage than a misfortune.

Mr. Erskine then said, that having established, from the past conduct of ministers, they were bound, upon their own principles, to negotiate at this moment, he would conclude the little he had to say, by showing the manifest interest we had in listening to offers of peace. The present government of France must either continue and establish its authority by wise policy and fortunate events, or it must perish in the storm of another revolution: that surely was a self-evident proposition. It was no less a one, that the government which overturned it must either be a democratical revolution of the French people from within, or the return of the House of Bourbon, placed upon their ancient throne, by the triumphant arms of the confederacy. If Buonaparté's government became established and confirmed in its authority, it was admitted, after some undefined period of probation, we were in the end to consent to peace; but was it certain that France would then be as willing as at present to be at peace with *us?* Fatal experience had taught us the contrary; for, after every interval when peace had been repelled by us, we had seen France in a more formidable aspect, and with a more alienated spirit. If, on the other hand, the government of Buonaparté gave way to an internal democratic revolution, additional difficulties presented themselves: ministers, upon their own principles, must put that new government upon a similar state of probation, and so *in infinitum* any other establishment which might succeed in a revolutionary system.—But what internal revolution might be expected to destroy Buonaparté's government from within, if ever it should be destroyed? From whence could its destruction possibly come but from the revulsion of democracy, overawed by armies, and chained down by the complicated forms of the present complex government? In the event of such a revolution, all our panics would return upon us: the terror of French

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principles would again become predominant, and war would be persisted in, though ruinous and hopeless, to prevent the more dangerous contagion of opinions to be engendered by a peace. But was it Buonaparté we objected to? Was it the man and not the government we mistrusted? Were we to make war then till his place was taken by some new consul, though the present government might remain? He did not mean to enter into any discussion of the character of this extraordinary person; but he would ask, whether the history of the world, much less the present state of France, moral or civil, furnished a reasonable expectation, that either accidents or new convulsions would raise up to power some character whose moderation and justice might be more safely reposed in? From the womb of revolution and war, there had arisen in the world but one man of that description: there was but one Washington: alas! rather there only had been one—for, after having emancipated his country by his military skill, and founded her empire by his civil wisdom, it had pleased God to remove him from the world only a few months before the government he might be said to have created, was fixing its seat in a city he had founded, and which was to carry his name, and the memory of genuine glory, to endless generations. No other alternative then remained but the restoration of the Bourbon-house. He would not enter into what good could be expected for England from such an event: he would, in the teeth of all history and experience, suppose it to be auspicious, and confine himself to its practicability. He might assume the utter impossibility of such a change, except by the success of the confederacy; it must be, and only be, by entering France at the head of hostile armies, and placing Louis 18th on the throne; but not placing him only; he must be held upon it by the pressure of the power which fixed him there: and held upon it against the most obvious interests of the people of France, at least of that part of the people which have the most decided influence in all countries — the people with whom property resided.

The whole property of France, real and personal, in the hands of its present possessors, depended upon the existence of the present, or some similar government.—It was impossible to restore the princes of the Bourbon-house without restitution to those who had been exiled in its defence, which, in effect, raised up the whole property in the nation to support the republic, whatever they might feel concerning its defects. The same principle supported the British government far more than her constitution, however estimable, and gave new strength to ministers in proportion as they ceased to deserve it. The destruction which a revolution in this country would bring upon public credit, and the ruin and downfall which would attend all the forms and tenures on which every kind of property depended for its security, formed an insurmountable bulwark here at home: the three per cents was the great fountain of loyalty and support to the establishments of Great Britain; every man who was invited to mix in revolutionary projects, above all as he advanecd in life, and was fettered by its duties and obligations, considered these obstacles: he looked to his family, which he could still protect; to his friends, to whom he could, in spight of our burthens, administer consolation; and to his mortgages and lands, which furnished him with the only means to perform the duties, or to enjoy the delights of his existence. He felt so strongly the operation of these, that even if he could very distinctly anticipate the future advantages of a revolution, yet if it certainly were to bring on for the present the calamities he had adverted to, he should feel disposed to cast the sacrifice upon the rising generation, who might, after bearing the burthens, endure till the advantages came round to them. These feelings were not peculiar to this nation, but to every nation similarly circumstanced. It appeared to him, therefore, impossible that the Bourbon-house could ever re-establish its authority without convulsion after convulsion, and war after war, which, if Great Britain were embarked in the duty or necessity of mixing in and maintaining, would ultimately destroy her resources, cramp all her pursuits, which had created her greatness, and, perhaps, pull down the very constitution which we sought to support by means so repugnant to all the ends of wise and prudent government.

But without resorting to the eventual or probable effects, one consequence of it appeared to be certain. Our insulting answer would confirm the very government which we sought to destroy: it would produce unanimity at the very moment when nothing but division could

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support our cause. Upon the universal principles of human interest and feeling, it would raise up all France as a man against us: it would dissipate all lesser differences in the cause of common safety. The only way of judging of the effect of our answer, as a grand manifesto to unite all France, was, to reverse the case, and to suppose that we had sent to France the pacific propositions, and that she had rejected it in the insulting language of our answer; that we had replied, putting aside the offence, and still inviting peace, and that France had finally referred to her first insulting refusal as her final determination. What would have been the consequence *here?* From what he felt in his own breast, he could rely upon the universal feelings of the country. He would have said to the right hon. gentleman, "However we have differed on the causes or conduct of the war, it is now my duty and my interest to support you in the prosecution of it. It is no longer matter of choice, but of necessity: I am not only bound in interest, but feel every sentiment of enthusiasm connected with the security and glory of my country." In the same manner, *Frenchmen*, of all descriptions, would reason on the present occasion; and that natural sentiment, when supported by the influence and power of their government, would be irresistible: our answer would discomfit their rebellion, and recruit their armies. Buonaparté would have too good reason to forgive all the intemperate declamations against his character and dominion, when they furnished him with the surest means of advancing and confirming them. In every view, therefore, of the question, he was decidedly against expressing any approbation of the answer which had been sent. It appeared to him to be pregnant with danger, and entailed an awful responsibility upon those who had advised it, and upon those who supported it.

Mr. *Pitt* said:—Sir, I am induced at this period of the debate to offer my sentiments to the House, both from an apprehension that, at a later hour, the attention of the House must necessarily be exhausted, and because the sentiment with which the learned gentleman began his speech, and with which he has thought proper to conclude it, places the question precisely on that ground on which I am most desirous of discussing it. The learned gentleman seems to assume, as the foundation of his reasoning, and as the great argument for immediate treaty, that every effort to overturn the system of the French revolution must be unavailing; and that it would be not only imprudent, but almost impious, to struggle longer against that order of things, which, on I know not what principle of predestination, he appears to consider as immortal. Little as I am inclined to accede to this opinion, I am not sorry that the hon. gentleman has contemplated the subject in this serious view. I do, indeed, consider the French revolution as the severest trial which the visitation of Providence has ever yet inflicted upon the nations of the earth: but I cannot help reflecting, with satisfaction, that this country, even under such a trial, has not only been exempted from those calamities which have covered almost every other part of Europe, but appears to have been reserved as a refuge and asylum to those who fled from its persecution, as a barrier to oppose its progress, and, perhaps, ultimately as an instrument to deliver the world from the crimes and miseries which have attended it. Under this impression, I trust the House will forgive me, if I endeavour, as far as I am able, to take a large and comprehensive view of this important question. In doing so, I agree with my honourable friend, that it would, in any case, be impossible to separate the present discussion from the former crimes and atrocities of the French revolution; because both the papers now on the table, and the whole of the learned gentleman's argument, force upon our consideration the origin of the war, and all the material facts which have occurred during its continuance. The learned gentleman has revived and retailed all those arguments from his own pamphlet, which had before passed through thirty-seven or thirty-eight editions in print; and now gives them to the House, embellished by the graces of his personal delivery. The first consul has also thought fit to revive and retail the chief arguments used by all the opposition speakers, and all the opposition publishers, in this country during the last seven years. And (what is still more material) the question itself, which is now immediately at issue—the question, whether, under the present circumstances, there is such a prospect of security from any treaty with France as ought to induce us to negotiate, cannot be properly decided upon, without retracing, both from our own experience, and from that of other nations, the nature, the causes, and

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the magnitude of the danger against which we have to guard, in order to judge of the security which we ought to accept.

I say, then, that before any man can concur in opinion with that learned gentleman—before any man can think that the substance of his majesty's answer is any other than the safety of the country required; before any man can be of opinion, that to the overtures made by the enemy, at such a time, and under such circumstances, it would have been safe to have returned an answer concurring in the negotiation—he must come within one of the three following descriptions: he must either believe, that the French revolution neither does now exhibit, nor has at any time exhibited, such circumstances of danger, arising out of the very nature of the system and the internal state and condition of France, as to leave to foreign powers no adequate ground of security in negotiation; or, secondly, he must be of opinion, that the change which has recently taken place, has given that security which, in the former stages of the revolution, was wanting; or thirdly, he must be one who, believing that the danger existed, not undervaluing its extent, nor mistaking its nature, nevertheless thinks, from his view of the present pressure on the country, from his view of its situation and its prospects, compared with the situation and prospects of its enemies, that we are, with our eyes open, bound to accept of inadequate security for every thing that is valuable and sacred, rather than endure the pressure, or incur the risk, which would result from a farther prolongation of the contest.

In discussing the last of these questions, we shall be led to consider, what inference is to be drawn from the circumstances and the result of our own negotiations in former periods of the war;—whether, in the comparative state of this country and France, we now see the same reason for repeating our then unsuccessful experiments;—or whether we have not thence derived the lessons of experience, added to the deductions of reason, marking the inefficacy and danger of the very measures which are quoted to us as precedents for our adoption. Unwilling, Sir, as I am to go into much detail on ground which has been so often trodden before; yet, when I find the learned gentleman, after all the information which he must have received, if he has read any of the answers to his work (however ignorant he might be when he wrote it), still giving the sanction of his authority to the supposition, that the order to M. Chauvelin to depart from this kingdom was the cause of the war between this country and France, I do feel it necessary to say a few words on that part of the subject.

Inaccuracy in dates seems to be a sort of fatality common to all who have written on that side of the question; for even the writer of the note to his majesty is not more correct, in this respect, than if he had taken his information only from the pamphlet of the learned gentleman. The House will recollect the first professions of the French republic, which are enumerated, and enumerated truly, in that note—they are tests of every thing which would best recommend a government to the esteem and confidence of foreign powers, and the reverse of every thing which has been the system and practice of France now for near ten years. It is there stated, that their first principles were love of peace, aversion to conquest, and respect for the independence of other countries. In the same note, it seems, indeed, admitted, that they since have violated all those principles; but it is alleged that they have done so, only in consequence of the provocation of other powers. One of the first of those provocations is stated to have consisted in the various outrages offered to their ministers, of which the example is said to have been set by the king of Great Britain in his conduct to M. Chauvelin. In answer to this supposition, it is only necessary to remark, that before the example was given, before Austria and Prussia are supposed to have been thus encouraged to combine in a plan for the partition of France; that plan, if it ever existed at all, had existed and been acted upon for above eight months: France and Prussia had been at war eight months before the dismissal of M. Chauvelin. So much for the accuracy of the statement. [Mr. Erskine here observed that this was not the statement of his argument.] I have been hitherto commenting on the arguments contained in the notes: I come now to those of the learned gentleman. I understand him to say, that the dismissal of M. Chauvelin was the real cause, I do not say of the general war, but of the rupture between France and England; and the learned gentleman states, particularly, that this dismissal rendered all discussion

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of the points in dispute impossible. Now I desire to meet distinctly every part of this assertion: I maintain, on the contrary, that an opportunity was given for discussing every matter in dispute between France and Great Britain, as fully as if a regular and accredited French minister had been resident here;—that the causes of war which existed at the beginning, or arose during the course of this discussion, were such as would have justified, twenty times over, a declaration of war on the part of this country;—that all the explanations on the part of France, were evidently unsatisfactory and inadmissible; and that M. Chauvelin had given in a peremptory ultimatum, declaring that, if these explanations were not received as sufficient, and if we did not immediately disarm, our refusal would be considered as a declaration of war. After this followed that scene which no man can even now speak of without horror, or think of without indignation; that murder and regicide from which I was sorry to hear the learned gentleman date the beginning of the legal government of France. Having thus given in their ultimatum, they added, as a further demand (while we were smarting under accumulated injuries, for which all satisfaction was denied) that we should instantly receive M. Chauvelin as their ambassador, with new credentials, representing them in the character which they had just derived from the murder of their sovereign. We replied, "he came here as the representative of a sovereign whom you have put to a cruel and illegal death; we have no satisfaction for the injuries we have received, no security from the danger with which we are threatened. Under these circumstances we will not receive your new credentials; the former credentials you have yourselves recalled by the sacrifice of your king."

What from that moment was the situation of M. Chauvelin? He was reduced to the situation of a private individual, and was required to quit the kingdom, under the provisions of the Alien act, which, for the purpose of securing domestic tranquillity, had recently invested his majesty with the power of removing out of this kingdom all foreigners suspected of revolutionary principles. Is it contended that he was, then, less liable to the provisions of that act than any other individual foreigner, whose conduct afforded to government just ground of objection or suspicion? Did his conduct and connexions here afford no such ground? or will it be pretended that the bare act of refusing to receive fresh credentials from an infant republic, not then acknowledged by any one power of Europe, and in the very act of heaping upon us injuries and insults, was of itself the cause of war? So far from it, that even the very nations of Europe, whose wisdom and moderation have been repeatedly extolled for maintaining neutrality, and preserving friendship, with the French republic, remained for years subsequent to this period, without receiving from it any accredited minister, or doing any one act to acknowledge its political existence. In answer to a representation from the belligerent powers, in December, 1793, count Bernstorff, the minister of Denmark, officially declared, that "it was well known, that the National Convention had appointed M. Grouville minister-plenipotentiary at Denmark, but that it was also well known, that he had neither been received nor acknowledged in that quality." And as late as February, 1796, when the same minister was at length, for the first time, received in his official capacity, count Bernstorff, in a public note, assigned this reason for that change of conduct—"So long as no other than a revolutionary government existed in France, his majesty could not acknowledge the minister of that government; but now that the French constitution is completely organized, and a regular government established in France, his majesty's obligation ceases in that respect, and M. Grouville will therefore be acknowledged in the usual form." How far the court of Denmark was justified in the opinion, that a revolutionary government then no longer existed in France, it is not now necessary to inquire: but whatever may have been the fact in that respect, the principle on which they acted is clear and intelligible, and is a decisive instance in favour of the proposition which I have maintained.

Is it then necessary to examine what were the terms of that ultimatum, with which we refused to comply? Acts of hostility had been openly threatened against our allies; an hostility founded upon the assumption of a right which would at once supersede the whole law of nations:—a demand was made by France upon Holland, to open the navigation of the Scheldt, on the ground of a general

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and national right, in violation of positive treaty; this claim we discussed, at the time, not so much on account of its immediate importance (though it was important both in a maritime and commercial view), as on account of the general principle on which it was founded. On the same arbitrary notion they soon afterwards discovered that sacred law of nature, which made the Rhine and the Alps the legitimate boundaries of France, and assumed the power which they have affected to exercise through the whole of the revolution, of superseding, by a new code of their own, all the recognised principles of the law of nations. They were actually advancing towards the republic of Holland, by rapid strides, after the victory of Jemappe, and they had ordered their generals to pursue the Austrian troops into any neutral country; thereby explicitly avowing an intention of invading Holland. They had already shown their moderation and self-denial, by incorporating Belgium with the French republic. These lovers of peace, who set out with a sworn aversion to conquest, and professions of respect for the independence of other nations; who pretend that they departed from this system, only in consequence of your aggression, themselves in time of peace while you were still confessedly neutral, without the pretence or shadow of provocation, wrested Savoy from the king of Sardinia, and had proceeded to incorporate it likewise with France. These were their aggressions at this period; and more than these. They had issued a universal declaration of war against all the thrones of Europe; and they had, by their conduct, applied it particularly and specifically to you; they had passed the decree of the 19th of November, 1792, proclaiming the promise of French succour to all nations who should manifest a wish to become free: they had, by all their language, as well as their example, shown what they understood to be freedom: they had sealed their principles by the deposition of their sovereign: they had applied them to England, by inviting and encouraging the addresses of those seditious and traitorous societies, who, from the beginning, favoured their views, and who, encouraged by your forbearance, were even then publicly avowing French doctrines, and anticipating their success in this country; who were hailing the progress of those proceedings in France, which led to the murder of its king: they were even then looking to the day when they should behold a national convention in England, formed upon similar principles.

And what were the explanations they offered on these different grounds of offence? As to Holland; they contented themselves with telling us, that the Scheldt was too insignificant for us to trouble ourselves about, and therefore it was to be decided as they chose, in breach of a positive treaty, which they had themselves guaranteed, and which we, by our alliance, were bound to support. If, however, after the war was over, Belgium should have consolidated its liberty (a term of which we now know the meaning, from the fate of every nation into which the arms of France have penetrated), then Belgium and Holland might, if they pleased, settle the question of the Scheldt, by separate negotiation between themselves. With respect to aggrandizement, they assured us, that they would retain possession of Belgium by arms no longer than they should find it necessary for the purpose already stated, of consolidating its liberty. And with respect to the decree of the 19th of November, applied as it was pointedly to you, by all the intercourse I have stated with all the seditious and traitorous part of this country, and particularly by the speeches of every leading man among them, they contented themselves with asserting, that the declaration conveyed no such meaning as was imputed to it, and that, so far from encouraging sedition, it could apply only to countries where a great majority of the people should have already declared itself in favour of a revolution; a supposition which, as they asserted, necessarily implied a total absence of all sedition.

What would have been the effect of admitting this explanation?—to suffer a nation, and an armed nation, to preach to the inhabitants of all the countries in the world, that themselves were slaves, and their rulers tyrants: to encourage and invite them to revolution, by a previous promise of French support, to whatever might call itself a majority, or to whatever France might declare to be so. This was their explanation; and this they told you, was their ultimatum. But was this all? Even at that very moment, when they were endeavouring to induce you to admit these explanations, to be contented with the avowal, that France offered herself as a general guarantee for every suc-

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cessful revolution, and would interfere only to sanction and confirm whatever the free and uninfluenced choice of the people might have decided, what were their orders to their generals on the same subject? In the midst of these amicable explanations with you, came forth a decree, which I really believe must be effaced from the minds of gentlemen opposite to me, if they can prevail upon themselves for a moment to hint even a doubt upon the origin of this quarrel, not only as to this country, but as to all the nations of Europe with whom France has been subsequently engaged in hostility. I speak of the decree of the 15th of December. This decree, more even than all the previous transactions, amounted to a universal declaration of war against all thrones, and against all civilized governments. It said, wherever the armies of France shall come (whether within countries then at war or at peace is not distinguished), in all those countries it shall be the first care of their generals to introduce the principles and the practice of the French revolution; to demolish all privileged orders, and every thing which obstructs the establishment of their new system.

If any doubt is entertained, whither the armies of France were intended to come, if it is contended that they referred only to those nations with whom they were then at war, or with whom, in the course of this contest, they might be driven into war; let it be remembered, that, at this very moment, they had actually given orders to their generals to pursue the Austrian army from the Netherlands into Holland, with whom they were at that time in peace. Or, even if the construction contended for is admitted, let us see what would have been its application; let us look at the list of their aggressions, which was read by my right hon. friend near me. With whom have they been at war since the period of this declaration? With all the nations of Europe save two, and if not with those two, it is only because, with every provocation that could justify defensive war, those countries have hitherto acquiesced in repeated violations of their rights, rather than recur to war for their vindication. Wherever their arms have been carried, it will be a matter of short subsequent inquiry to trace whether they have faithfully applied these principles. If in terms, this decree is a denunciation of war against all governments; if in practice, it has been applied against every one with which France has come into contact; what is it but the deliberate code of the French revolution, from the birth of the republic, which has never once been departed from, which has been enforced with unremitted rigour against all the nations that have come into their power?

If there could otherwise be any doubt whether the application of this decree was intended to be universal, whether it applied to all nations, and to England particularly; there is one circumstance which alone would be decisive—that nearly at the same period it was proposed, in the National Convention (on a motion of M. Baraillon) to declare expressly, that the decree of the 19th of November was confined to the nations with whom they were then at war; and that proposal was rejected by a great majority of that very convention from whom we were desired to receive these explanations as satisfactory.

Such, Sir, was the nature of the system. Let us examine a little farther, whether it was from the beginning intended to be acted upon, in the extent which I have stated. At the very moment when their threats appeared to many little else than the ravings of madmen, they were digesting and methodizing the means of execution, as accurately as if they had actually foreseen the extent to which they have since been able to realize their criminal projects; they sat down coolly to devise the most regular and effectual mode of making the application of this system the current business of the day, and incorporating it with the general orders of their army; for (will the House believe it?) this confirmation of the decree of the 19th of November, was accompanied by an exposition and commentary addressed to the general of every army of France, containing a schedule as coolly conceived, and as methodically reduced, as any by which the most quiet business of a justice of peace, or the most regular routine of any department of state in this country could be conducted. Each commander was furnished with one general blank formula of a letter for all the nations of the world! The people of France to the people of . . . . . greeting: "We are come to expel your tyrants." Even this was not all; one of the articles of the decree of the 15th of December, 1792 was expressly, "that those who should show

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themselves so brutish and so enamoured of their chains as to refuse the restoration of their rights, to renounce liberty and equality, or to preserve, recall, or treat with their prince or privileged orders, were not entitled to the distinction which France, in other cases, had justly established between government and people; and that such a people ought to be treated according to the rigour of war, and of conquest." Here is their love of peace; here is their aversion to conquest; here is their respect for the independence of other nations! It was then, after receiving such explanations as these, after receiving the ultimatum of France, and after M. Chauvelin's credentials had ceased, that he was required to depart. Even after that period, I am almost ashamed to record it, we did not on our part shut the door against other attempts to negoitate: but this transaction was immediately followed by the declaration of war, proceeding not from England in vindication of its rights, but from France as the completion of the injuries and insults they had offered. And on a war thus originating can it be doubted, by an English House of Commons, whether the aggression was on the part of this country or of France? or whether the manifest aggression on the part of France was the result of any thing but the principles which characterize the French revolution?

What, then, are the resources and subterfuges by which those who agree with the learned gentleman are prevented from sinking under the force of this simple statement of facts? None but what are found in the insinuation contained in the note from France, that this country had, previous to the transactions to which I have referred, encouraged and supported the combination of other powers directed against them. Upon this part of the subject, the proofs which contradict, such an insinuation are innumerable. In the first place, the evidence of dates: in the second place, the admission of all the different parties in France; of the friends of Brissot charging on Robespierre the war with this country, and of the friends of Robespierre charging it on Brissot; but both acquitting England; the testimonies of the French government during the whole interval, since the declaration of Pilnitz, and the date assigned to the pretended treaty of Pavia: the first of which had not the slightest relation to any project of partition or dismemberment! the second of which I firmly believe to be an absolute fabrication and forgery; and in neither of which, even as they are represented, any reason has been assigned for believing that this country had any share. Even M. Talleyrand himself was sent by the constitutional king of the French, after the period when that concert, which is now charged must have existed, if it existed at all, with a letter from the king of France, expressly thanking his majesty for the neutrality which he had uniformly observed. The same fact is confirmed by the concurring evidence of every person who knew any thing of the plans of the king of Sweden in 1791; the only sovereign who, I believe, at that time meditated any hostile measures against France, and whose utmost hopes were expressly stated to be, that England would not oppose his intended expedition; by all those, also, who knew any thing of the conduct of the emperor, or the king of Prussia; by the clear and decisive testimony of M. Chauvelin himself, in his dispatches from hence to the French government, since published by their authority; by every thing which has occurred since the war; by the publications of Dumourier; by the publications of Brissot; by the facts that have since come to light in America, with respect to the mission of M. Ganet; which show that hostility against this country was decided on the part of France long before the period when M. Chauvelin was sent from hence. Besides this, the reduction of our peace establishment in the year 1791, and continued to the subsequent year, is a fact from which the inference is indisputable: a fact which, I am afraid, shows, not only that we were not waiting for the occasion of war, but that, in our partiality for a pacific system, we had indulged ourselves in a fond and credulous security, which wisdom and discretion would not have dictated. In addition to every other proof, it is singular enough, that in a decree, on the eve of the declaration of war on the part of France, it is expressly stated, as for the first time, that England was then departing from that system of neutrality which she had hitherto observed.

But, Sir, I will not rest merely on these testimonies or arguments, however strong and decisive. I assert, distinctly and positively, and I have the documents in my hand to prove it, that from the middle of the year 1791, upon the first rumour of

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any measure taken by the emperor of Germany, and till late in the year 1792, we not only were no parties to any of the projects imputed to the emperor, but, from the political circumstances in which we then stood with relation to that court we wholly declined all communications with him on the subject of France. To Prussia, with whom we were in connexion, and still more decisively to Holland, with whom we were in close and intimate correspondence, we uniformly stated our unalterable resolution to maintain neutrality, and avoid interference in the internal affairs of France, as long as France should refrain from hostile measures against us and our allies. No minister of England had any authority to treat with foreign states, even provisionally, for any warlike concert, till after the battle of Jemappe; till a period subsequent to the repeated provocations which had been offered to us, and subsequent particularly to the decree of fraternity of the 19th of November; even then, to what object was it that the concert which we wish to establish was to be directed? If we had then rightly cast the true character of the French revolution, I cannot now deny that we should have been better justified in a very different conduct. But it is material to the present argument to declare what that conduct actually was, because it is of itself sufficient to confute all the pretexts by which the advocates of France have so long laboured to perplex the question of aggression.

At that period, Russia had at length conceived, as well as ourselves, a natural and just alarm for the balance of Europe, and applied to us to learn our sentiments on the subject. In our answer to this application, we imparted to Russia the principles upon which we then acted, and we communicated this answer to Prussia, with whom we were connected in defensive alliance. I will state shortly the leading part of those principles. A dispatch was sent from lord Grenville to his majesty's minister in Russia, dated the 29th Dec. 1792, stating a desire to have an explanation set on foot on the subject of the war with France, I will read the material parts of it: "The two leading points on which such explanation will naturally turn, are the line of conduct to be followed previous to the commencement of hostilities, and with a view, if possible, to avert them; and the nature and amount of the forces which the powers engaged in this concert might be enabled to use, supposing such extremities unavoidable. With respect to the first, it appears on the whole, subject, however, to future consideration and discussion with the other powers, that the most adviseable step to be taken would be, that sufficient explanation should be had with the powers at war with France, in order to enable those not hitherto engaged in the war, to propose to that country terms of peace. That these terms should be, the withdrawing their arms within the limits of the French territory: the abandoning their conquests; the rescinding any acts injurious to the sovereignty or rights of any other nations, and the giving, in some unequivocal manner, a pledge of their intention no longer to foment troubles, or to excite disturbances against other governments. In return for these stipulations, the different powers of Europe, who should be parties to this measure, might engage to abandon all measures, or views of hostility against France, or interference in their internal affairs, and to maintain a correspondence and intercourse of amity with the existing powers in that country, with whom such a treaty may be concluded. If, on the result of this proposal so made by the powers acting in concert, these terms should not be accepted by France, or being accepted, should not be satisfactorily performed, the different powers might then engage themselves to each other to enter into active measures for the purpose of obtaining the ends in view; and it may be to be considered, whether, in such case, they might not reasonably look to some indemnity for the expenses and hazards to which they would necessarily be exposed." The dispatch then proceeded to the second point, that of the forces to be employed, on which it is unnecessary now to speak.

Now, Sir, I would really ask any person who has been, from the beginning, the most desirous of avoiding hostilities, whether it is possible to conceive any measure to be adopted in the situation in which we then stood, which could more evidently demonstrate our desire, after repeated provocations, to preserve peace, on any terms consistent with our safety; or whether any sentiment could now be suggested which would have more plainly marked our moderation, forbearance, and sincerity? In saying this, I am not challenging the applause and approbation of

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my country, because I must now confess that we were too slow in anticipating that danger, of which we had, perhaps, even then sufficient experience, though far short, indeed, of that which we now possess; and that we might even then have seen, what facts have since but too incontestibly proved, that nothing but vigorous and open hostility can afford complete and adequate security against revolutionary principles, while they retain a proportion of power sufficient to furnish the means of war.

I will enlarge no farther on the origin of the war. I have read and detailed to you a system which was in itself a declaration of war against all nations, which was so intended, and which has been so applied, which has been exemplified in the extreme peril and hazard of almost all who for a moment have trusted to treaty, and which has not at this hour overwhelmed Europe in one indiscriminate mass of ruin, only because we have not indulged, to a fatal extremity, that disposition, which we have however indulged too far, because we have not consented to trust to profession and compromise rather than to our own valour and exertion, for security against a system, from which we never shall be delivered, till either the principle is extinguished, or till its strength is exhausted. I might, Sir, if I found it necessary, enter into much detail upon this part of the subject; but at present I only beg leave to express my readiness at any time to enter upon it, when either my own strength, or the patience of the House will admit of it; but, I say, without distinction, against every nation in Europe, and against some out of Europe, the principle has been faithfully applied. You cannot look at the map of Europe, and lay your hand upon that country against which France has not either declared an open and aggressive war, or violated some positive treaty, or broken some recognized principle of the law of nations.

This subject may be divided into various periods. There were some acts of hostility committed previous to the war with this country, and very little indeed subsequent to that declaration, which abjured the love of conquest. The attack upon the papal state, by the seizure of Avignon, in 1791, was accompanied by a series of the most atrocious crimes and outrages that ever disgraced a revolution. Avignon was separated from its lawful sovereign, with whom, not even the pretence of quarrel existed, and forcibly incorporated in the tyranny of one and indivisible France. The same system led, in the same year, to an aggression against the whole German empire, by the seizure of Porentrui, part of the dominions of the bishop of Basle. Afterwards, in 1792, unpreceded by any declaration of war, or any cause of hostility, and in direct violation of the solemn pledge to abstain from conquest, an attack was made upon the king of Sardinia, by the seizure of Savoy, for the purpose of incorporating it, in like manner, with France. In the same year, they had proceeded to the declaration of war against Austria, against Prussia, and against the German empire, in which they have been justified only on a ground of rooted hostility, combination, and league of sovereigns, for the dismemberment of France. I say, that some of the documents, brought to support this pretence, are spurious and false; I say, that even in those that are not so, there is not one word to prove the charge principally relied upon, that of an intention to effect the dismemberment of France, or to impose upon it by force, any particular constitution. I say, that as far as we have been able to trace what passed at Pilnitz, the declaration there signed referred to the imprisonment of Louis 16th; its immediate view was, to effect his deliverance, if a concert sufficiently extensive could be formed with other sovereigns, for that purpose. It left the internal state of France to be decided by the king restored to his liberty with the free consent of the states of his kingdom, and it did not contain one word relative to the dismemberment of France.

In the subsequent discussions which took place in 1792, and which embraced at the same time, all the other points of jealousy which had arisen between the two countries, the declaration of Pilnitz was referred to, and explained on the part of Austria in a manner precisely conformable to what I have now stated; and the amicable explanations which took place, both on this subject and on all the matters in dispute, will be found in the official correspondence between the two courts, which has been made public; and it will be found also, that as long as the negotiation continued to be conducted through M. Delessart, then minister for foreign affairs, there was a great prospect that those discussions would be amicably terminated,

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but it is notorious, and has since been clearly proved, on the authority of Brissot himself, that the violent party in France considered such an issue of the negotiation as likely to be fatal to their projects, and thought, to use his own words, that "war was necessary to consolidate the revolution." For the express purpose of producing the war, they excited a popular tumult in Paris; they insisted upon and obtained the dismissal of M. Delessart. A new minister was appointed in his room, the tone of the negotiation was immediately changed, and an ultimatum was sent to the emperor, similar to that which was afterwards sent to this country, affording him no satisfaction on his just grounds of complaint, and requiring him, under those circumstances, to disarm. The first events of the contest proved how much more France was prepared for war than Austria, and afford a strong confirmation of the proposition which I maintain; that no offensive intention was entertained on the part of the latter power.

War was then declared against Austria; a war which I state to be a war of aggression on the part of France. The king of Prussia had declared, that he should consider war against the Emperor or empire, as war against himself. He had declared, that, as a co-estate of the empire, he was determined to defend their rights; that, as an ally of the Emperor, he would support him to the utmost against any attack; and that, for the sake of his own dominions, he felt himself called upon to resist the progress of French principles, and to maintain the balance of power in Europe. With this notice before them, France declared war upon the Emperor, and the war with Prussia was the necessary consequence of this aggression, both against the Emperor and the empire.—The war against the king of Sardinia follows next. The declaration of that war was the seizure of Savoy, by an invading army; and on what ground? On that which has been stated already. They had found out, by some light of nature, that the Rhine and the Alps were the natural limits of France. Upon that ground Savoy was seized; and Savoy was also incorporated with France.

Here finishes the history of the wars in which France was engaged, antecedent to the war with Great Britain, with Holland, and with Spain. With respect to Spain, we have seen nothing in any part of its conduct, which leads us to suspect, that either attachment to religion, or the ties of consanguinity, or regard to the ancient system of Europe, was likely to induce that court to connect itself in offensive war against France. The war was evidently and incontestably begun by France against Spain. The case of Holland is so fresh in every man's recollection, and so connected with the immediate causes of the war with this country, that it cannot require one word of observation. What shall I say then on the case of Portugal? I cannot indeed say, that France ever declared war against that country; I can hardly say even that she ever made war, but she required them to make a treaty of peace, as if they had been at war; she obliged them to purchase that treaty; she broke it as soon as it was purchased, and she had originally no other ground of complaint than this,—that Portugal had performed, though inadequately, the engagement of its ancient defensive alliance with this country, in the character of an auxiliary; a conduct which cannot of itself make any power a principal in a war.

I have now enumerated all the nations at war at that period, with the exception only of Naples. It can hardly be necessary to call to the recollection of the House, the characteristic feature of revolutionary principles which was shown, even at this early period, in the personal insult offered to the king of Naples, by the commander of a French squadron, riding uncontrolled in the Mediterranean, and (while our fleets were yet unarmed) threatening destruction to all the coast of Italy. It was not till a considerably later period that almost all the other nations of Europe found themselves equally involved in actual hostility: but it is not a little material to the whole of my argument, compared with the statement of the learned gentleman, and with that contained in the French note, to examine at what period this hostility extended itself. It extended itself, in the course of 1796, to the states of Italy which had hitherto been exempted from it. In 1797, it had ended in the destruction of most of them; it had ended in the virtual deposition of the king of Sardinia, it had ended in the conversion of Genoa and Tuscany into democratic republics; it had ended in the revolution of Venice, in the violation of treaties with the new Venetian republic; and finally, in transferring that very republic, the creature and vassal of France, to the dominion of Austria.

I observe from the gestures of some

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hon. gentlemen, that they think we are precluded from the use of any argument founded on this last transaction. I already hear them saying, that it was as criminal in Austria to receive, as it was in France to give. I am far from defending or palliating the conduct of Austria upon this occasion: but because Austria, unable at last to contend with the arms of France, was forced to accept an unjust and insufficient indemnification from the conquests France had made from it, are we to be debarred from stating what, on the part of France, was not merely an unjust acquisition, but an act of the grossest and most aggravated perfidy and cruelty, and one of the most striking specimens of that system which has been uniformly and indiscriminately applied to all the countries which France has had within its grasp? This can only be said in vindication of France (and it is still more a vindication of Austria), that, practically speaking, if there is any part of this transaction for which Venice itself has reason to be grateful, it can only be for the permission to exchange the embraces of French fraternity for what is called the despotism of Vienna.

Let these facts, and these dates, be compared with what we have heard. The hon. gentleman has told us, and the author of the note from France has told us also, that all the French conquests were produced by the operations of the allies. It was when they were pressed on all sides, when their own territory was in danger, when their own independence was in question, when the confederacy appeared too strong; it was then they used the means with which their power and their courage furnished them; and, "attacked upon all sides, they carried every where their defensive arms." (Vide M. Talleyrand's note.) I do not wish to misrepresent the learned gentleman, but I understood him to speak of this sentiment with approbation: the sentiment itself is this, that if a nation is unjustly attacked in any one quarter by others, she cannot stop to consider by whom, but must find means of strength in other quarters, no matter where; and is justified in attacking, in her turn, those with whom she is at peace, and from whom she has received no species of provocation.

Sir, I hope I have already proved, in a great measure, that no such attack was made upon France; but if it was made, I maintain, that the whole ground on which that argument is founded cannot be tolerated. In the name of the laws of nature and nations, in the name of every thing that is sacred and honourable, I demur to that plea, and I tell that hon. and learned gentleman that he would do well to look again into the law of nations, before he ventures to come to this House to give the sanction of his authority to so dreadful and execrable a system. [Mr. Erskine here said across the House, that he had never maintained such a proposition.] I certainly understood this to be distinctly the tenor of the learned gentleman's argument; but as he tells me he did not use it, I take it for granted he did not intend to use it: I rejoice that he did not: but, at least, then I have a right to expect, that the learned gentleman should now transfer to the French note some of the indignation which he has hitherto lavished upon the declarations of this country. This principle, which the learned gentleman disclaims, the French note avows: and I contend, without the fear of contradiction, it is the principle upon which France has uniformly acted. But while the learned gentleman disclaims this proposition, he certainly will admit, that he has himself asserted, and maintained in the whole course of his argument, that the pressure of the war upon France, imposed upon her the necessity of those exertions which produced most of the enormities of the revolution, and most of the enormities practised against the other countries of Europe. The House will recollect, that, in the year 1796, when all these horrors in Italy were beginning, which are the strongest illustrations of the general character of the French revolution, we had begun that negotiation to which the learned gentleman has referred. England then possessed numerous conquests; England, though not having at that time had the advantage of three of her most splendid victories, England, even then, appeared undisputed mistress of the sea; England, having then engrossed the whole wealth of the colonial world; England, having lost nothing of its original possessions; England then comes forward, proposing general peace, and offering—what? Offering the surrender of all that it had acquired, in order to obtain—what? Not the dismemberment, not the partition of ancient France, but the return of a part of those conquests, no one

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of which could be retained, but in direct contradiction to that original and solemn pledge which is now referred to, as the proof of the just and moderate disposition of the French republic. Yet even this offer was not sufficient to procure peace, or to arrest the progress of France in her defensive operations against other unoffending countries. From the pages, however, of the learned gentleman's pamphlet (which, after all its editions, is now fresher in his memory than in that of any other person in this House, or in the country), he is furnished with an argument on the result of the negotiation, on which he appears confidently to rely. He maintains, that the single point on which the negotiation was broken off, was the question of the possession of the Austrian Netherlands; and that it is, therefore, on that ground only, that the war has, since that time, been continued. When this subject was before under discussion, I stated, and I shall state again (notwithstanding the learned gentleman's accusation of my having endeavoured to shift the question from its true point), that the question, then at issue, was not, whether the Netherlands should in fact, be restored; though even on that question I am not, like the learned gentleman, unprepared to give any opinion; I am ready to say, that to leave that territory in the possession of France would be obviously dangerous to the interests of this country, and is inconsistent with the policy which it has uniformly pursued, at every period in which it has concerned itself in the general system of the continent; but it was not on the decision of this question of expediency and policy, that the issue of the negotiation then turned; what was required of us by France was, not merely that we should acquiesce in her retaining the Netherlands, but that, as a preliminary to all treaty, and before entering upon the discussion of terms, we should recognize the principle, that whatever France, in time of war, had annexed to the republic, must remain inseparable for ever, and could not become the subject of negotiation. I say that, in refusing such a preliminary, we were only resisting the claim of France, to arrogate to itself the power of controlling, by its own separate and municipal acts, the rights and interests of other countries, and moulding, at its discretion, a new and general code of the law of nations.

In reviewing the issue of this negotiation, it is important to observe, that France, who began by abjuring a love of conquest, was desired to give up nothing of her own, not even to give up all that she had conquered; that it was offered to her to receive back all that had been conquered from her; and when she rejected the negotiation for peace upon these grounds, are we then to be told of the unrelenting hostility of the combined powers, for which France was to revenge itself upon other countries, and which is to justify the subversion of every established government, and the destruction of property, religion, and domestic comfort, from one end of Italy to the other? Such was the effect of the war against Modena, against Genoa, against Tuscany, against Venice, against Rome, and against Naples; all of which she engaged in, or prosecuted, subsequent to this very period.

After this, in the year 1797, Austria had made peace, England, and its ally, Portugal (from whom we could expect little active assistance, but whom we felt it our duty to defend), alone remained in the war. In that situation, under the pressure of necessity, which I shall not disguise, we made another attempt to negociate. In 1797, Prussia, Spain, Austria, and Naples, having successively made peace, the princes of Italy having been destroyed, France having surrounded itself, in almost every part in which it is not surrounded by the sea, with revolutionary republics, England made another offer of a different nature. It was not now a demand that France should restore any thing. Austria having made peace upon her own terms, England had nothing to require with regard to her allies; she asked no restitution of the dominions added to France in Europe. So far from retaining any thing French out of Europe, we freely offered them all, demanding only, as a poor compensation, to retain a part of what we had acquired by arms, from Holland, then identified with France, and that part, useless to Holland, and necessary for the security of our Indian possessions. This proposal also, Sir, was proudly refused, in a way which the learned gentleman himself has not attempted to justify, indeed of which he has spoken with detestation. I wish, since he has not finally abjured his duty in this House, that that detestation had been stated earlier, that he had mixed his own voice with the general voice of his country, on the result of that negotiation.

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Let us look at the conduct of France immediately subsequent to this period. She had spurned at the offers of Great Britain; she had reduced her continental enemies to the necessity of accepting a precarious peace; she had (in spite of those pledges repeatedly made and uniformly violated) surrounded herself by new conquests, on every part of her frontier but one; that one was Switzerland. The first effect of being relieved from the war with Austria, of being secured against all fears of continental invasion on the ancient territory of France, was their unprovoked attack against this unoffending and devoted country. This was one of the scenes which satisfied even those who were the most incredulous, that France had thrown off the mask, "if indeed she had ever worn it." * It collected, in one view, many of the characteristic features of that revolutionary system which I have endeavoured to trace. The perfidy which alone rendered their arms successful, the pretext of which they availed themselves to produce division and prepare the entrance of Jacobinism in that country, the proposal of armistice, one of the known and regular engines of the revolution, which was, as usual, the immediate prelude to military execution, attended with cruelty and barbarity of which there are few examples: all these are known to the world. The country they attacked was one which had long been the faithful ally of France, which, instead of giving cause of jealousy to any other power, had been, for ages, proverbial for the simplicity and innocence of its manners, and which had acquired and preserved the esteem of all the nations of Europe; which had almost, by the common consent of mankind, been exempted from the sound of war, and marked out as a land of Goshen, safe and untouched in the midst of surrounding calamities.

Look then at the fate of Switzerland, at the circumstances which led to its destruction, add this instance to the catalogue of aggression against all Europe, and then tell me whether the system I have described has not been prosecuted with an unrelenting spirit, which cannot be subdued in adversity, which cannot be appeased in prosperity, which neither solemn professions, nor the general law of nations, nor the obligation of treaties (whether previous to the revolution or subsequent to it), could restrain from the subversion of every state into which, either by force or fraud, their arms could penetrate. Then tell me, whether the disasters of Europe are to be charged upon the provocation of this country and its allies, or on the inherent principle of the French revolution, of which the natural result produced so much misery and carnage in France, and carried desolation and terror over so large a portion of the world.

Sir, much as I have now stated, I have not finished the catalogue. America almost as much as Switzerland, perhaps, contributed to that change, which has taken place in the minds of those who were originally partial to the principles of the French government. The hostility against America followed a long course of neutrality adhered to, under the strongest provocations, or rather of repeated compliance to France, with which we might well have been dissatisfied. It was on the face of it, unjust and wanton; and it was accompanied by those instances of sordid corruption which shocked and disgusted even the enthusiastic admirers of revolutionary purity, and threw a new light on the genius of revolutionary government.

After this, it remains only shortly to remind gentlemen of the aggression against Egypt, not omitting, however, to notice the capture of Malta, in the way to Egypt. Inconsiderable as that island may be thought, compared with the scenes we have witnessed, let it be remembered, that it is an island of which the government had long been recognized by every state of Europe, against which France pretended no cause of war, and whose independence was as dear to itself and as sacred as that of any country in Europe. It was in fact not unimportant from its local situation to the other powers of Europe, but in proportion as any man may diminish its importance, the instance will only serve the more to illustrate and confirm the proposition which I have maintained.—The all-searching eye of the French revolution looks to every part of Europe, and every quarter of the world, in which can be found an object either of acquisition or plunder. Nothing is too great for the temerity of its ambition, nothing too small or insignificant for the grasp of its rapacity. From hence Buonaparté and his army proceeded to Egypt. The attack was made, pretences were held out to the natives of that country in the name of the French king, whom they had

* Vide Speeches at the Whig Club.

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murdered; they pretended to have the approbation of the grand seignior, whose territories they were violating; their project was carried on under the profession of a zeal for Mahometanism; it was carried on by proclaiming that France had been reconciled to the Mussulman faith, had abjured that of Christianity, or, as he in his impious language termed it, of "the sect of the Messiah."

The only plea which they have since held out to colour this atrocious invasion of a neutral and friendly territory, is, that it was the road to attack the English power in India. It is most unquestionably true, that this was one and a principal cause of this unparalleled outrage; but another, and an equally substantial cause (as appears by their own statements), was the division and partition of the territories of what they thought a falling power. It is impossible to dismiss this subject without observing that this attack against Egypt was accompanied by an attack upon the British possessions in India, made on true revolutionary principles. In Europe, the propagation of the principles of France had uniformly prepared the way for the progress of its arms. To India, the lovers of peace had sent the messengers of Jacobinism, for the purpose of inculcating war in those distant regions, on Jacobin principles, and of forming Jacobin clubs, which they actually succeeded in establishing, and which in most respects resembled the European model, but which were distinguished by this peculiarity, that they were required to swear in one breath, *hatred to tyranny, the love of liberty, and the destruction of all kings and sovereigns—except the good and faithful ally of the French republic,* CITIZEN TIPPOO.

What then was the nature of this system? Was it any thing but what I have stated it to be; an insatiable love of aggrandisement, an implacable spirit of destruction directed against all the civil and religious institutions of every country? This is the first moving and acting spirit of the French revolution; this is the spirit which animated it at its birth, and this is the spirit which will not desert it till the moment of its dissolution, "which grew with its growth, which strengthened with its strength," but which has not abated under its misfortunes, nor declined in its decay; it has been invariably the same in every period, operating more or less, according as accident or circumstances might assist it, but it has been inherent in the revolution in all its stages, it has equally belonged to Brissot, to Robespierre, to Tallien, to Reubel, to Barras, and to every one of the leaders of the Directory, but to none more than to Buonaparté, in whom now all their powers are united. What are its characters? Can it be accident that produced them? No, it is only from the alliance of the most horrid principles with the most horrid means, that such miseries could have been brought upon Europe. It is this paradox, which we must always keep in mind when we are discussing any question relative to the effects of the French revolution. Groaning under every degree of misery, the victim of its own crimes, and as I once before expressed it in this House, asking pardon of God and of man for the miseries which it has brought upon itself and others, France still retains (while it has neither left means of comfort, nor almost of subsistence to its own inhabitants) new and unexampled means of annoyance and destruction against all the other powers of Europe.

Its first fundamental principle was, to bribe the poor against the rich, by proposing to transfer into new hands, on the delusive notion of equality, and in breach of every principle of justice, the whole property of the country; the practical application of this principle was, to devote the whole of that property to indiscriminate plunder, and to make it the foundation of a revolutionary system of finance, productive in proportion to the misery and desolation which it created. It has been accompanied by an unwearied spirit of proselytism, diffusing itself over all the nations of the earth; a spirit which can apply itself to all circumstances and all situations, which can furnish a list of grievances, and hold out a promise of redress equally to all nations, which inspired the teachers of French liberty with the hope of alike recommending themselves to those who live under the feudal code of the German empire; to the various states of Italy, under all their different institutions; to the old republicans of Holland, and to the new republicans of America; to the catholic of Ireland, whom it was to deliver from protestant usurpation; to the protestant of Switzerland, whom it was to deliver from popish superstition; and to the mussulman of Egypt, whom it was to deliver from Christian persecution; to the remote Indian, blindly bigotted to his ancient insti-

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tutions; and to the natives of Great Britain, enjoying the perfection of practical freedom, and justly attached to their constitution, from the joint result of habit, of reason, and of experience. The last and distinguishing feature is a perfidy, which nothing can bind, which no tie of treaty, no sense of the principles generally received among nations, no obligation, human or divine, can restrain. Thus qualified, thus armed for destruction, the genius of the French revolution marched forth, the terror and dismay of the world. Every nation has in its turn been the witness, many have been the victims of its principles, and it is left for us to decide, whether we will compromise with such a danger, while we have yet resources to supply the sinews of war, while the heart and spirit of the country is yet unbroken, and while we have the means of calling forth and supporting a powerful co-operation in Europe.

Much more might be said on this part of the subject; but if what I have said already is a faithful, though only an imperfect sketch of those excesses and outrages, which even history itself will hereafter be unable fully to record, and a just representation of the principle and source from which they originated, will any man say that we ought to accept a precarious security against so tremendous a danger? Much more will he pretend, after the experience of all that has passed, in the different stages of the French revolution, that we ought to be deterred from probing this great question to the bottom, and from examining, without ceremony or disguise, whether the change which has recently taken place in France, is sufficient now to give security, not against a common danger, but against such a danger as that which I have described?

In examining this part of the subject, let it be remembered, that there is one other characteristic of the French revolution, as striking as its dreadful and destructive principles, I mean the instability of its government, which has been of itself sufficient to destroy all reliance, if any such reliance could, at any time, have been placed on the good faith of any of its rulers. Such has been the incredible rapidity with which the revolutions in France have succeeded each other, that I believe the names of those who have successively exercised absolute power, under the pretence of liberty, are to be numbered by the years of the revolution; and each of the new constitutions, which, under the same pretence, has, in its turn, been imposed by force on France, every one of which alike was founded upon principles which professed to be universal, and was intended to be established and perpetuated among all the nations of the earth—each of these will be found; upon an average, to have had about two years, as the period of its duration.

Under this revolutionary system, accompanied with this perpetual fluctuation and change, both in the form of the government and in the persons of the rulers, what is the security which has hitherto existed, and what new security is now offered? Before an answer is given to this question, let me sum up the history of all the revolutionary governments of France, and of their characters in relation to other powers, in words more emphatical than any which I could use—the memorable words pronounced, on the eve of this last constitution, by the orator* who was selected to report to an assembly, surrounded by a file of grenadiers, the new form of liberty which it was destined to enjoy under the auspices of general Buonaparté. From this reporter the mouth and organ of the new government, we learn this important lesson:—"It is easy to conceive why peace was not concluded before the establishment of the constitutional government. The only government which then existed, described itself as revolutionary; it was, in fact, only the tyranny of a few men who were soon overthrown by others, and it consequently presented no stability of principles or of views, no security either with respect to men, or with respect to things. It should seem that that stability and that security ought to have existed from the establishment, and as the effect, of the constitutional system; and yet they did not exist more, perhaps even less, than they had done before. In truth, we did make some partial treaties, we signed a continental peace, and a general congress was held to confirm it; but these treaties, these diplomatic conferences, appear to have been the source of a new war, more inveterate and more bloody than before. —Before the 18th Fructidor (4th September) of the 5th year, the French government exhibited to foreign nations so

* Vide Speech of Boulay de la Meurthe, in the Council of Five Hundred, at St. Cloud, 19th Brumaire (9th November), 1799.

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uncertain an existence, that they refused to treat with it. After this great event, the whole power was absorbed in the Directory; the legislative body can hardly be said to have existed: treaties of peace were broken, and war carried every where, without that body having any share in those measures. The same Directory, after having intimidated all Europe, and destroyed, at its pleasure, several governments, neither knowing how to make peace or war, or how even to establish itself, was overturned by a breath, on the 13th Prairial (18th June), to make room for other men, influenced, perhaps, by different views, or who might be governed by different principles. Judging then, only from notorious facts, the French government must be considered as exhibiting nothing fixed, neither in respect to men or to things." Here, then, is the picture, down to the period of the last revolution, of the state of France under all its successive governments!

Having taken a view of what it was, let us now examine what it is. In the first place, we see, as has been truly stated, a change in the description and form of the sovereign authority; a supreme power is placed at the head of this nominal republic, with a more open avowal of military despotism than at any former period; with a more open and undisguised abandonment of the names and pretences under which that despotism long attempted to conceal itself. The different institutions, republican in their form and appearance, which were before the instruments of that despotism, are now annihilated; they have given way to the absolute power of one man, concentrating in himself all the authority of the state, and differing from other monarchs only in this, that, as my hon. friend (Mr. Canning) truly stated it, he wields a sword instead of a sceptre. What then is the confidence we are to derive either from the frame of the government, or from the character and past conduct of the person who is now the absolute ruler of France? Had we seen a man of whom we had no previous knowledge, suddenly invested with the sovereign authority of the country; invested with the power of taxation, with the power of the sword, the power of war and peace, the unlimited power of commanding the resources, of disposing of the lives and fortunes of every man in France; if we had seen, at the same moment, all the inferior machinery of the revolution, which, under the variety of successive shocks, had kept the system in motion, still remaining entire, all that, by requisition and plunder, had given activity to the revolutionary system of finance, and had furnished the means of creating an army, by converting every man, who was of age to bear arms, into a soldier, not for the defence of his own country, but for the sake of carrying unprovoked war into surrounding countries; if we had seen all the subordinate instruments of Jacobin power subsisting in their full force, and retaining (to use the French phrase) all their original organization; and had then observed this single change in the conduct of their affairs, that there was now one man with no rival to thwart his measures, no colleague to divide his powers, no council to control his operations, no liberty of speaking or writing, no expression of public opinion to check or influence his conduct; under such circumstances, should we be wrong to pause, or wait for the evidence of facts and experience, before we consented to trust our safety to the forbearance of a single man, in such a situation, and to relinquish those means of defence which have hitherto carried us safe through all the storms of the revolution? if we were to ask what are the principles and character of this stranger, to whom fortune has suddenly committed the concerns of a great and powerful nation?

But is this the actual state of the present question? Are we talking of a stranger of whom we have heard nothing? No, Sir; we have heard of him; we, and Europe, and the world, have heard both of him and of the satellites by whom he is surrounded; and it is impossible to discuss fairly the propriety of any answer which could be returned to his overtures of negotiation, without taking into consideration the inferences to be drawn from his personal character and conduct. I know it is the fashion with some gentlemen to represent any reference to topics of this nature as invidious and irritating; but the truth is, that they rise unavoidably out of the very nature of the question. Would it have been possible for ministers to discharge their duty, in offering their advice to their sovereign, either for accepting or declining negotiation, without taking into their account the reliance to be placed on the disposition and the principles of the person, on whose disposition and principles the security to

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be obtained by treaty, must, in the present circumstances, principally depend? or would they act honestly or candidly towards parliament and towards the country, if, having been guided by these considerations, they forbore to state publicly and distinctly the real grounds which have influenced their decision; and if, from a false delicacy and groundless timidity, they purposely declined an examination of a point, the most essential towards enabling parliament to form a just determination on so important a subject?

What opinion, then, are we led to form of the pretensions of the consul to those particular qualities which, in the official note, are represented as affording us, from his personal character, the surest pledge of peace? We are told, this is his second attempt at general pacification. Let us see, for a moment, how this second attempt has been conducted. There is, indeed, as the learned gentleman has said, a word in the first declaration which refers to general peace, and which states this to be the second time in which the consul has endeavoured to accomplish that object. We thought fit, for the reasons which have been assigned, to decline altogether the proposal of treating, under the present circumstances; but we, at the same time, expressly stated, that, whenever the moment for treaty should arrive, we would in no case treat, but in conjunction with our allies. Our general refusal to negotiate at the present moment did not prevent the consul from renewing his overtures; but were they renewed for the purpose of general pacification? Though he had hinted at general peace in the terms of his first note; though we had shown, by our answer, that we deemed negotiation, even for general peace, at this moment, inadmissible; though we added, that, even at any future period, we would treat only in conjunction with our allies; what was the proposal contained in his last note?—To treat, not for general peace, but for a separate peace between Great Britain and France.

Such was the second attempt to effect general pacification: a proposal for a separate treaty with Great Britain. What had been the first? The conclusion of a separate treaty with Austria; and, in addition to this fact, there are two anecdotes connected with the conclusion of this treaty, which are sufficient to illustrate the disposition of this pacificator of Europe. This very treaty of Campo Formio was ostentatiously professed to be concluded with the Emperor, for the purpose of enabling Buonaparté to take the command of the army of England, and to dictate a separate peace with this country on the banks of the Thames. But there is this additional circumstance, singular beyond all conception, considering that we are now referred to the treaty of Campo Formio as a proof of the personal disposition of the consul to general peace: he sent his two confidential and chosen friends, Berthier and Monge, charged to communicate to the Directory this treaty of Campo Formio; to announce to them, that one enemy was humbled, that the war with Austria was terminated, and therefore, that now was the moment to prosecute their operations against this country; they used, on this occasion, the memorable words, "the kingdom of Great Britain and the French republic cannot exist together." This, I say, was the solemn declaration of the deputies and ambassadors of Buonaparté himself, offering to the Directory the first fruits of this first attempt at general pacification.

So much for his disposition towards general pacification: let us look next at the part he has taken in the different stages of the French revolution, and let us then judge whether we are to look to him, as the security against revolutionary principles; let us determine what reliance we can place on his engagements with other countries, when we see how he has observed his engagements to his own. When the constitution of the third year was established under Barras, that constitution was imposed by the arms of Buonaparté, then commanding the army of the triumvirate in Paris. To that constitution he then swore fidelity. How often he has repeated the same oath, I know not; but twice at least, we know that he has not only repeated it himself, but tendered it to others, under circumstances too striking not to be stated.

Sir, the House cannot have forgotten the revolution of the fourth of September, which produced the dismissal of lord Malmsbury from Lisle. How was that revolution procured? It was procured chiefly by the promise of Buonaparté (in the name of his army), decidedly to support the Directory in those measures which led to the infringement and violation of every thing that the authors of the constitution of 1795, or its adherents, could consider as fundamental, and which

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established a system of despotism inferior only to that now realized in his own person. Immediately before this event, in the midst of the desolation and bloodshed of Italy, he had received the sacred present of new banners from the Directory; he delivered them to his army with this exhortation: "Let us swear, fellow soldiers, by the manes of the patriots who have died by our side, eternal hatred to the enemies of the constitution of the third year:" That very constitution which he soon after enabled the Directory to violate, and which, at the head of his grenadiers, he has now finally destroyed. Sir, that oath was again renewed, in the midst of that very scene to which I have last referred; the oath of fidelity to the constitution of the third year was administered to all the members of the assembly then sitting (under the terror of the bayonet), as the solemn preparation for the business of the day; and the morning was ushered in with swearing attachment to the constitution, that the evening might close with its destruction.

If we carry our views out of France, and look at the dreadful catalogue of all the breaches of treaty, all the acts of perfidy at which I have only glanced, and which are precisely commensurate with the number of treaties which the republic have made (for I have sought in vain for any one which it has made and which it has not broken); if we trace the history of them all from the beginning of the revolution to the present time, or if we select those which have been accompanied by the most atrocious cruelty, and marked the most strongly with the characteristic features of the revolution, the name of Buonaparté will be found allied to more of them than that of any other that can be handed down in the history of the crimes and miseries of the last ten years. His name will be recorded with the horrors committed in Italy, in the memorable campaign of 1796 and 1797, in the Milanese, in Genoa, in Modena, in Tuscany, in Rome, and in Venice.

His entrance into Lombardy was announced by a solemn proclamation, issued on the 27th of April, 1796, which terminated with these words: "Nations of Italy! the French army is come to break your chains; the French are the friends of the people in every country; your religion, your property, your customs, shall be respected." This was followed by a second proclamation, dated from Milan, 20th of May, and signed "Buonaparté," in these terms: "Respect for property and personal security, respect for the religion of countries; these are the sentiments of the government of the French republic, and of the army of Italy. The French, victorious, consider the nations of Lombardy as their brothers." In testimony of this fraternity, and to fulfil the solemn pledge of respecting property, this very proclamation imposed on the Milanese a provisional contribution to the amount of twenty millions of livres, or near one million sterling; and successive exactions were afterwards levied on that single state to the amount, in the whole, of near six millions sterling. The regard to religion and to the customs of the country was manifested with the same scrupulous fidelity. The churches were given up to indiscriminate plunder. Every religious and charitable fund, every public treasure was confiscated. The country was made the scene of every species of disorder and rapine. The priests, the established form of worship, all the objects of religious reverence, were openly insulted by the French troops; at Pavia, particularly, the tomb of St. Augustine, which the inhabitants were accustomed to view with peculiar veneration, was mutilated and defaced. This last provocation having roused the resentment of the people, they flew to arms, surrounded the French garrison, and took them prisoners, but carefully abstained from offering any violence to a single soldier. In revenge for this conduct, Buonaparté, then on his march to the Mincio, suddenly returned, collected his troops, and carried the extremity of military execution over the country: he burnt the town of Benasco, and massacred eight hundred of its inhabitants; he marched to Pavia, took it by storm, and delivered it over to general plunder, and published, at the same moment, a proclamation of the 26th of May, ordering his troops to shoot all those who had not laid down their arms, and taken an oath of obedience, and to burn every village where the *tocsin* should be sounded, and to put its inhabitants to death.

The transactions with Modena were on a smaller scale, but in the same character. Buonaparté began by signing a treaty, by which the duke of Modena was to pay twelve millions of livres, and neutrality was promised him in return; this was soon followed by the personal arrest of the duke, and by a fresh extortion of two

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hundred thousand sequins; after this he was permitted, on the payment of a further sum, to sign another treaty, called a *Convention de Sureté*, which was, of course, only the prelude to the repetition of similar exactions. Nearly at the same period, in violation of the rights of neutrality, and of the treaty which had been concluded between the French republic and the grand duke of Tuscany in the preceding year, and in breach of a positive promise given only a few days before, the French army forcibly took possession of Leghorn, for the purpose of seizing the British property which was deposited there, and confiscating it as prize; and shortly after, when Buonaparté agreed to evacuate Leghorn in return for the evacuation of the island of Elbe, which was in the possession of the British troops, he insisted upon a separate article, by which, in addition to the plunder before obtained, by the infraction of the law of nations, it was stipulated, that the grand duke should pay to the French the expense which they had incurred by this invasion of his territory.

In the proceedings towards Genoa, we shall find not only a continuation of the same system of extortion and plunder (in violation of the solemn pledge contained in the proclamations already referred to), but a striking instance of the revolutionary means employed for the destruction of independent governments. A French minister was at that time resident at Genoa, which was acknowledged by France to be in a state of neutrality and friendship: in breach of this neutrality, Buonaparté began, in the year 1796, with the demand of a loan; he afterwards, from the month of September, required and enforced the payment of a monthly subsidy, to the amount which he thought proper to stipulate; these exactions were accompanied by repeated assurances and protestations of friendship; they were followed, in May 1797, by a conspiracy against the government, fomented by the emissaries of the French embassy, and conducted by the partisans of France, encouraged and afterwards protected by the French minister. The conspirators failed in their first attempt; overpowered by the courage and voluntary exertions of the inhabitants, their force was dispersed, and many of their number were arrested. Buonaparté instantly considered the defeat of the conspirators as an act of aggression against the French republic; he dispatched an aid-de-camp with an order to the senate of this independent state; first, to release all the French who were detained; secondly, to punish those who had arrested them; thirdly, to declare, that they had had no share in the insurrection; and fourthly, to disarm the people. Several French prisoners were immediately released, and a proclamation was preparing to disarm the inhabitants, when, by a second note, Buonaparté required the arrest of the three inquisitors of state, and immediate alterations in the constitution; he accompanied this with an order to the French minister to quit Genoa, if his commands were not immediately carried into execution; at the same moment his troops entered the territory of the republic, and shortly after the councils, intimidated and overpowered, abdicated their functions. Three deputies were then sent to Buonaparté to receive from him a new constitution: on the 6th of June, after the conferences at Montebello, he signed a convention, or rather issued a decree, by which he fixed the new form of their government; he himself named provisionally all the members who were to compose it, and he required the payment of seven millions of livres, as the price of the subversion of their constitution, and their independence. These transactions require but one short comment: it is to be found in the official account given of them at Paris, which is in these memorable words: "General Buonaparté has pursued the only line of conduct which could be allowed in the representative of a nation, which has supported the war only to procure the solemn acknowledgment of the right of nations, to change the form of their government. He contributed nothing towards the revolution of Genoa, but he seized the first moment to acknowledge the new government, as soon as he saw that it was the result of the wishes of the people."*

It is unnecessary to dwell on the wanton attacks against Rome under the direction of Buonaparté himself, in the year 1796, and in the beginning of 1797, which led first, to the treaty of Tolentino, concluded by Buonaparté, in which, by enormous sacrifices, the pope was allowed to purchase the acknowledgment of his authority, as a sovereign prince; and secondly, to the violation of that very treaty, and to the subversion of the papal autho-

* Redacteur Official, June 30, 1797.

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rity by Joseph Buonaparté, the brother and the agent of the general, and the minister of the French republic to the holy see: a transaction accompanied by outrages and insults towards the pious and venerable pontiff (in spite of the sanctity of his age and the unsullied purity of his character), which even to a protestant, seemed hardly short of the guilt of sacrilege.

But of all the disgusting and tragical scenes which took place in Italy, in the course of the period I am describing, those which passed at Venice are perhaps the most striking, and the most characteristic: in May, 1796, the French army, under Buonaparté, in the full tide of its success against the Austrians, first approached the territories of this republic, which, from the commencement of the war, had observed a rigid neutrality. Their entrance on these territories was, as usual, accompanied by a solemn proclamation in the name of their general, "Buonaparté to the Republic of Venice." "It is to deliver the finest country in Europe from the iron yoke of the proud house of Austria, that the French army has braved obstacles the most difficult to surmount. Victory in union with justice has crowned its efforts. The wreck of the enemy's army has retired behind the Mincio. The French army, in order to follow them, passes over the territory of the republic of Venice; but it will never forget, that ancient friendship unites the two republics. Religion, government, customs, and property, shall be respected. That the people may be without apprehension, the most severe discipline shall be maintained. All that may be provided for the army shall be faithfully paid for in money. The general-in-chief engages the officers of the republic of Venice, the magistrates, and the priests, to make known these sentiments to the people, in order, that confidence may cement that friendship which has so long united the two nations, faithful in the path of honour, as in that of victory. The French soldier is terrible only to the enemies of his liberty and his government. Buonaparté."

This proclamation was followed by exactions similar to those which were practised against Genoa, by the renewal of similar professions of friendship, and the use of similar means to excite insurrections. At length, in the spring of 1797, occasion was taken from disturbances thus excited, to forge, in the name of the Venetian government, a proclamation,* hostile to France; and this proceeding was made the ground for military execution against the country, and for effecting by force the subversion of its ancient government, and the establishment of the democratic forms of the French revolution. This revolution was sealed by a treaty, signed in May 1797, between Buonaparté and commissioners appointed on the part of the new and revolutionary government of Venice. By the second and third secret articles of this treaty, Venice agreed to give as a ransom, to secure itself against all farther exactions or demands, the sum of three millions of livres in money, the value of three millions more in articles of naval supply, and three ships of the line; and it received in return the assurances of the friendship and support of the French republic. Immediately after the signature of this treaty, the arsenal, the library, and the palace of St. Marc, were ransacked and plundered, and heavy additional contributions were imposed upon its inhabitants: and, in not more than four months afterwards, this very republic of Venice, united by alliance to France, the creature of Buonaparté himself, from whom it had received the present of French liberty, was, by the same Buonaparté, transferred, under the treaty of Campo Formio, to "that iron yoke of the proud house of Austria," to deliver it from which he had represented in his first proclamation to be the great object of all his operations.

Sir, all this is followed by the memorable expedition into Egypt, which I mention, not merely because it forms a principal article in the catalogue of those acts of violence and perfidy in which Buonaparté has been engaged; not merely because it was an enterprise peculiarly his own, of which he was himself the planner, the executor, and the betrayer; but chiefly because, when from thence he retires to a different scene to take possession of a new throne, from which he is to speak upon an equality with the kings and governors of Europe, he leaves behind him, at the moment of his departure, a specimen, which cannot be mistaken, of his principles of negotiation. The intercepted correspondence, which has been alluded to in this debate, seems to afford the strongest

* Vide Account of this transaction, in the Proclamation of the Senate of Venice, April 12, 1798.

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ground to believe, that his offers to the Turkish government to evacuate Egypt were made solely with a view "to gain time;*" that the ratification of any treaty on this subject was to be delayed with the view of finally eluding its performance, if any change of circumstances favourable to the French should occur in the interval. But whatever gentlemen may think of the intention with which these offers were made, there will at least be no question with respect to the credit due to those professions by which he endeavoured to prove, in Egypt, his pacific dispositions. He expressly enjoins his successor, strongly and steadily to insist in all his intercourse with the Turks, that he came to Egypt with no hostile design, and that he never meant to keep possession of the country; while, on the opposite page of the same instructions, he states in the most unequivocal manner his regret at the discomfiture of his favourite project of colonizing Egypt, and of maintaining it as a territorial acquisition. Now, Sir, if in any note addressed to the grand vizier, or the sultan, Buonaparté had claimed credit for the sincerity of his professions, that he forcibly invaded Egypt with no view hostile to Turkey, and solely for the purpose of molesting the British interests; is there any one argument now used to induce us to believe his present professions to us, which might not have been equally urged on that occasion to the Turkish government? Would not those professions have been equally supported by solemn asseverations, by the same reference which is now made to personal character, with this single difference, that they would then have been accompanied with one instance less of that perfidy, which we have had occasion to trace in this very transaction?

It is unnecessary to say more with respect to the credit due to his professions, or the reliance to be placed on his general character; but it will, perhaps, be argued, that, whatever may be his character, or whatever has been his past conduct, he has now an interest in making and preserving peace. That he has an interest in making peace is at best but a doubtful proposition, and that he has an interest in preserving it is still more uncertain. That it is his interest to negotiate, I do not indeed deny: it is his interest above all to engage this country in separate negotiation, in order to loosen and dissolve the whole system of confederacy on the continent, to palsy, at once, the arms of Russia or of Austria, or of any other country that might look to you for support; and then either to break off his separate treaty, or if he should have concluded it, to apply the lesson which is taught in his school of policy in Egypt; and to revive, at his pleasure, those claims of indemnification which *may have been reserved to some happier period.**

This is precisely the interest which he has in negotiation; but on what grounds are we to be convinced that he has an interest in concluding and observing a solid and permanent pacification? Under all the circumstances of his personal character, and his newly acquired power, what other security has he for retaining that power, but the sword? His hold upon France is the sword, and he has no other. Is he connected with the soil, or with the habits, the affections, or the prejudices of the country? He is a stranger, a foreigner, and an usurper; he unites in his own person every thing that a pure republican must detest; every thing that an enraged Jacobin has abjured; every thing that a sincere and faithful royalist must feel as an insult. If he is opposed at any time in his career, what is his appeal? *He appeals to his fortune;* in other words, to his army and his sword. Placing, then, his whole reliance upon military support, can he afford to let his military renown pass away, to let his laurels wither, to let the memory of his achievements sink in obscurity? Is it certain that with his army confined within France, and restrained from inroads upon her neighbours, he can maintain, at his devotion, a force sufficiently numerous to support his power? Having no object but the possession of absolute dominion, no passion but military glory, is it certain, that he can feel such an interest in permanent peace as would justify us in laying down our arms, reducing our expense, and relinquishing our means of security, on the faith of his engagements? Do we believe, that after the conclusion of peace, he would not still sigh over the last trophies of Egypt, wrested from him by the celebrated victory of Aboukir, and the brilliant exertions of that heroic band of British seamen, whose influence and example rendered the Turkish troops invincible at Acre? Can he forget, that the effect of these exploits enabled Austria

* Vide "Intercepted Letters from Egypt."

* Vide "Intercepted Letters from Egypt."

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and Russia, in one campaign, to récover from France all which she had acquired by his victories, to dissolve the charm, which, for a time, fascinated Europe, and to show that their generals, contending in a just cause, could efface, even by their success and their military glory, the most dazzling triumphs of his victories and desolating ambition?

Can we believe, with these impressions on his mind, that if, after a year, eighteen months, or two years, of peace had elapsed, he should be tempted by the appearance of a fresh insurrection in Ireland, encouraged by renewed and unrestrained communication with France, and fomented by the fresh infusion of Jacobin principles; if we were at such a moment without a fleet to watch the ports of France, or to guard the coasts of Ireland, without a disposable army, or an embodied militia, capable of supplying a speedy and adequate reinforcement, and that he had suddenly the means of transporting thither a body of twenty or thirty thousand French troops; can we believe, that at such a moment his ambition and vindictive spirit would be restrained by the recollection of engagements, or the obligation of treaty? Or, if in some new crisis of difficulty and danger to the Ottoman empire, with no British navy in the Mediterranean, no confederacy formed, no force collected to support it, an opportunity should present itself for resuming the abandoned expedition to Egypt, for renewing the avowed and favourite project of conquering and colonizing that rich and fertile country, and of opening the way to wound some of the vital interests of England, and to plunder the treasures of the East, in order to fill the bankrupt coffers of France, would it be the interest of Buonaparté, uuder such circumstances, or his principles, his moderation, his love of peace, his aversion to conquest, and his regard for the independence of other nations—would it be all, or any of these that would secure us against an attempt, which would leave us only the option of submitting, without a struggle, to certain loss and disgrace, or of renewing the contest which we had prematurely terminated, and renewing it without allies, without preparation, with diminished means, and with increased difficulty and hazard?

Hitherto I have spoken only of the reliance which we can place on the professions, the character, and the conduct of the present first consul; but it remains to consider the stability of his power. The revolution has been marked throughout by a rapid succession of new depositaries of public authority, each supplanting his predecessor: what grounds have we as yet to believe that this new usurpation, more odious and more undisguised than all that preceded it, will be more durable? Is it that we rely on the particular provisions contained in the code of the pretended constitution, which was proclaimed as accepted by the French people, as soon as the garrison of Paris declared their determination to exterminate all its enemies, and before any of its articles could even be known to half the country, whose consent was required for its establishment?

I will not pretend to enquire deeply into the nature and effects of a constitution, which can hardly be regarded but as a farce and a mockery. If, however, it could be supposed that its provisions were to have any effect, it seems equally adapted to two purposes; that of giving to its founder for a time an absolute and uncontrolled authority, and that of laying the certain foundation of future disunion and discord, which, if they once prevail, must render the exercise of all the authority under the constitution impossible, and leave no appeal but to the sword.

Is, then, military despotism that which we are accustomed to consider as a stable form of government? In all ages of the world, it has been attended with the least stability to the persons who exercised it, and with the most rapid succession of changes and revolutions. The advocates of the French revolution boasted in its outset, that by their new system they had furnished a security for ever, not to France only, but to all countries in the world, against military despotism; that the force of standing armies was vain and delusive; that no artificial power could resist public opinion; and that it was upon the foundation of public opinion alone that any government could stand. I believe, that in this instance, as in every other, the progress of the French revolution has belied its professions; but so far from its being a proof of the prevalence of public opinion against military force, it is, instead of the proof, the strongest exception from that doctrine, which appears in the history of the world. Through all the stages of the revolution military force has governed; public opinion has scarcely been heard. But still I consider this as only an exception from a general truth: I still believe,

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that, in every civilised country (not enslaved by a Jacobin faction), public opinion is the only sure support of any government: I believe this with the more satisfaction, from a conviction, that if this contest is happily terminated, the established governments of Europe will stand upon that rock firmer than ever; and whatever may be the defects of any particular constitution, those who live under it will prefer its continuance to the experiment of changes which may plunge them in the unfathomable abyss of revolution, or extricate them from it, only to expose them to the terrors of military despotism. And to apply this to France, I see no reason to believe, that the present usurpation will be more permanent than any other military despotism, which has been established by the same means, and with the same defiance of public opinion.

What, then, is the inference I draw from all that I have now stated? Is it, that we will in no case treat with Buonaparté? I say no such thing. But I say, as has been said in the answer returned to the French note, that we ought to wait for experience, and the evidence of facts, before we are convinced that such a treaty is admissible. The circumstances I have stated, would well justify us if we should be slow in being convinced; but on a question of peace and war, every thing depends upon degree, and upon comparison. If, on the one hand, there should be an appearance that the policy of France is at length guided by different maxims from those which have hitherto prevailed; if we should hereafter see signs of stability in the government, which are not now to be traced; if the progress of the allied army should not call forth such a spirit in France, as to make it probable that the act of the country itself will destroy the system now prevailing; if the danger, the difficulty, the risk of continuing the contest, should increase, while the hope of complete ultimate success should be diminished; all these, in their due place, are considerations, which, with myself and (I can answer for it) with every one of my colleagues, will have their just weight. But at present these considerations all operate one way; at present there is nothing from which we can presage a favourable disposition to change in the French councils: There is the greatest reason to rely on powerful co-operation from our allies; there are the strongest marks of a disposition in the interior of France to active resistance against this new tyranny; and there is every ground to believe, on reviewing our situation, and that of the enemy, that if we are ultimately disappointed of that complete success which we are at present entitled to hope, the continuance of the contest, instead of making our situation comparatively worse, will have made it comparatively better.

If then, I am asked, how long are we to persevere in the war? I can only say, that no period can be accurately assigned before hand. Considering the importance of obtainining complete security for the objects for which we contend, we ought not to be discouraged too soon: but, on the other hand, considering the importance of not impairing and exhausting the radical strength of the country, there are limits beyond which we ought not to persist, and which we can determine only by estimating and comparing fairly, from time to time, the degree of security to be obtained by treaty, and the risk and disadvantage of continuing the contest.

But, Sir, there are some gentlemen in the House, who seem to consider it already certain, that the ultimate success to which I am looking is unattainable: they suppose us contending only for the restoration of the French monarchy, which they believe to be impracticable, and deny to be desirable for this country. We have been asked in the course of this debate, do you think you can impose monarchy upon France, against the will of the nation? I never thought it, I never hoped it, I never wished it; I have thought, I have hoped, I have wished, that the time might come when the effect of the arms of the allies might so far overpower the military force which keeps France in bondage, as to give vent and scope to the thoughts and actions of its inhabitants. We have, indeed, already seen abundant proof of what is the disposition of a large part of the country; we have seen almost through the whole of the revolution, the western provinces of France deluged with the blood of its inhabitants, obstinately contending for their ancient laws and religion. We have recently seen, in the revival of that war, a fresh instance of the zeal which still animates those countries, in the same cause. These efforts (I state it distinctly, and there are those near me who can bear witness to the truth of the assertion) were not produced by any instigation from hence; they were the ef-

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fects of a rooted sentiment prevailing through all those provinces, forced into action by the Law of the Hostages, and the other tyrannical measures of the Directory, at the moment when we were endeavouring to discourage so hazardous an enterprise. If, under such circumstances, we find them giving proofs of their unalterable perseverance in their principles; if there is every reason to believe that the same disposition prevails in many other extensive provinces of France; if every party appears at length equally wearied and disappointed with all the successive changes which the revolution has produced; if the question is no longer between monarchy, and even the pretence and name of liberty, but between the ancient line of hereditary princes on the one hand, and a military tyrant, a foreign usurper, on the other; if the armies of that usurper are likely to find sufficient occupation on the frontiers, and to be forced at length to leave the interior of the country at liberty to manifest its real feeling and disposition; what reason have we to anticipate, that the restoration of monarchy, under such circumstances, is impracticable?

The learned gentleman has, indeed, told us, that almost every man now possessed of property in France, must necessarily be interested in resisting such a change, and that therefore it never can be effected. If that single consideration were conclusive against the possibility of a change, for the same reason the revolution itself, by which the whole property of the country was taken from its ancient possessors, could never have taken place. But though I deny it to be an insuperable obstacle, I admit it to be a point of considerable delicacy and difficulty. It is not, indeed, for us to discuss minutely what arrangement might be formed on this point to conciliate and unite opposite interests; but whoever considers the precarious tenure and depreciated value of lands held under the revolutionary title, and the low price for which they have generally been obtained, will think it, perhaps, not impossible that an ample compensation might be made to the bulk of the present possessors, both for the purchase-money they have paid, and for the actual value of what they now enjoy; and that the ancient proprietors might be reinstated in the possession of their former rights, with only such a temporary sacrifice as reasonable men would willingly make to obtain so essential an object.

The honourable and learned gentleman, however, has supported his reasoning on this part of the subject, by an argument which he undoubtedly considers as unanswerable—a reference to what would be his own conduct in similar circumstances; and he tells us, that every landed proprietor in France must support the present order of things in that country from the same motive that he and every proprietor of three per cent stock would join in the defence of the constitution of Great Britain. I must do the learned gentleman the justice to believe, that the habits of his profession must supply him with better and nobler motives for defending a constitution which he has had so much occasion to study and examine, than any which he can derive from the value of his proportion (however large) of three per cents, even supposing them to continue to increase in price as rapidly as they have done, during the last three years, in which the security and prosperity of the country has been established by following a system directly opposite to the counsels of the learned gentleman and his friends.

The learned gentleman's illustration, however, though it fails with respect to himself, is happily and aptly applied to the state of France; and let us see what inference it furnishes with respect to the probable attachment of monied men to the continuance of the revolutionary system, as well as with respect to the general state of public credit in that country. I do not, indeed, know that there exists precisely any fund of three per cents in France, to furnish a test for the patriotism and public spirit of the lovers of French liberty. But there is another fund which may equally answer our purpose—the capital of three per cent stock which formerly existed in France has undergone a whimsical operation, similar to many other expedients of finance which we have seen in the course of the revolution—this was performed by a decree, which, as they termed it, *republicanized* their debt, that is, in other words, struck off, at once two-thirds of the capital, and left the proprietors to take their chance for the payment of interest on the remainder. This remnant was afterwards converted into the present five per cent stock. I had the curiosity very lately to inquire what price it bore in the market, and I was told that the price had somewhat risen from confidence in the new government, and was actually as high as seventeen. I really at

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first supposed that my informer meant seventeen years purchase for every pound of interest, and I began to be almost jealous of revolutionary credit; but I soon found that he literally meant seventeeen pounds for every hundred pounds capital stock of five per cent, that is, a little more than three and a half years purchase. So much for the value of revolutionary property, and for the attachment with which it must inspire its possessors towards the system of government to which that value is to be ascribed!

On the question, Sir, how far the restoration of the French monarchy, if practicable, is desirable, I shall not think it necessary to say much. Can it be supposed to be indifferent to us or to the world, whether the throne of France is to be filled by a prince of the house of Bourbon, or by him whose principles and conduct I have endeavoured to develope? Is it nothing, with a view to influence and example, whether the fortune of this last adventurer in the lottery of revolution shall appear to be permanent? Is it nothing, whether a system shall be sanctioned, which confirms by one of its fundamental articles, that general transfer of property from its ancient and lawful possessors, which holds out one of the most terrible examples of national injustice, and which has furnished the great source of revolutionary finance and revolutionary strength against all the powers of Europe?

In the exhausted and impoverished state of France, it seems for a time impossible that any system but that of robbery and confiscation, any thing but the continued torture, which can be applied only by the engines of the revolution, can extort from its ruined inhabitants more than the means of supporting, in peace, the yearly expenditure of its government. Suppose, then, the heir of the house of Bourbon reinstated on the throne, he will have sufficient occupation in endeavouring, if possible, to heal the wounds, and gradually to repair the losses of ten years of civil convulsion; to reanimate the drooping commerce, to rekindle the industry, to replace the capital, and to revive the manufactures of the country. Under such circumstances, there must probably be a considerable interval before such a monarch, whatever may be his views, can possess the power which can make him formidable to Europe; but while the system of the revolution continues, the case is quite different. It is true, indeed, that even the gigantic and unnatural means by which that revolution has been supported, are so far impaired; the influence of its principles, and the terror of its arms, so far weakened; and its power of action so much contracted and circumscribed, that against the embodied force of Europe, prosecuting a vigorous war, we may justly hope that the remnant and wreck of this system cannot long oppose an effectual resistance. But, supposing the confederacy of Europe prematurely dissolved: supposing our armies disbanded, our fleets laid up in our harbours, our exertions relaxed, and our means of precaution and defence relinquished: do we believe that the revolutionary power, with this rest and breathing-time given it to recover from the pressure under which it is now sinking, possessing still the means of calling suddenly and violently into action whatever is the remaining physical force of France, under the guidance of military despotism; do we believe that this power, the terror of which is now beginning to vanish, will not again prove formidable to Europe? Can we forget, that in the ten years in which that power has subsisted, it has brought more misery on surrounding nations, and produced more acts of aggression, cruelty, perfidy, and enormous ambition, than can be traced in the history of France for the centuries which have elapsed since the foundation of its monarchy, including all the wars which, in the course of that period, have been waged by any of those sovereigns, whose projects of aggrandizement, and violations of treaty, afford a constant theme of general reproach against the ancient government of France? And with these considerations before us, can we hesitate whether we have the best prospect of permanent peace, the best security for the independence and safety of Europe, from the restoration of the lawful government, or from the continuance of revolutionary power in the hands of Buonaparté?

In compromise and treaty with such a power, placed in such hands as now exercise it, and retaining the same means of annoyance which it now possesses, I see little hope of permanent security. I see no possibility at this moment, of concluding such a peace as would justify that liberal intercourse which is the essence of real amity; no chance of terminating the expenses or the anxieties

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of war, or of restoring to us any of the advantages of established tranquillity; and as a sincere lover of peace, I cannot be content with its nominal attainment; I must be desirous of pursuing that system which promises to attain, in the end, the permanent enjoyment of its solid and substantial blessings for this country and for Europe. As a sincere lover of peace, I will not sacrifice it by grasping at the shadow, when the reality is not substantially within my reach——*Cur igitur pacem nolo? Quia infida est, quia periculosa, quia esse non potest*

If, Sir, in all that I have now offered to the House, I have succeeded in establishing the proposition, that the system of the French revolution has been such as to afford to foreign powers no adequate ground for security in negotiation and that the change which has recently taken place has not yet afforded that security; if I have laid before you a just statement of the nature and extent of the danger with which we have been threatened; it would remain only shortly to consider, whether there is any thing in the circumstances of the present moment to induce us to accept a security confessedly inadequate against a danger of such a description.

It will be necessary here to say a few words on the subject on which gentlemen have been so fond of dwelling: I mean our former negotiations, and particularly that at Lisle in 1797. I am desirous of stating frankly and openly the true motives which induced me to concur in then recommending negotiation; and I will leave it to the House, and to the country, to judge whether our conduct at that time was inconsistent with the principles by which we are guided at present. That revolutionary policy which I have endeavoured to describe, that gigantic system of prodigality and bloodshed by which the efforts of France were supported, and which counts for nothing the lives and the property of a nation, had at that period driven us to exertions which had, in a great measure, exhausted the ordinary means of defraying our immense expenditure, and had led many of those who were the most convinced of the original justice and necessity of the war, and of the danger of Jacobin principles, to doubt the possibility of persisting in it, till complete and adequate security could be obtained. There seemed, too much reason to believe, that without some new measure to check the rapid accumulation of debt, we could no longer trust to the stability of that funding system, by which the nation had been enabled to support the expense of all the different wars in which we have engaged in the course of the present century. In order to continue our exertions with vigour, it became necessary that a new and solid system of finance should be established, such as could not be rendered effectual but by the general and decided concurrence of public opinion. Such a concurrence in the strong and vigorous measures necessary for the purpose could not then be expected, but from satisfying the country, by the strongest and most decided proofs that peace on terms in any degree admissible was unattainable.

Under this impression we thought it our duty to attempt negotiation, not from the sanguine hope, even at that time, that its result could afford us complete security, but from the persuasion, that the danger arising from peace under such circumstances was less than that of continuing the war with precarious and inadequate means. The result of those negotiations proved, that the enemy would be satisfied with nothing less than the sacrifice of the honour and independence of the country. From this conviction, a spirit and enthusiasm was excited in the nation, which produced the efforts to which we are indebted for the subsequent change in our situation. Having witnessed that happy change, having observed the increasing prosperity and security of the country from that period, seeing how much more satisfactory our prospects now are, than any which we could then have derived from the successful result of negotiation, I have not scrupled to declare, that I consider the rupture of the negotiation, on the part of the enemy, as a fortunate circumstance for the country. But because these are my sentiments at this time, after reviewing what has since passed, does it follow that we were, at that time, insincere in endeavouring to obtain peace? The learned gentleman, indeed, assumes that we were, and he even makes a concession, of which I desire not to claim the benefit: he is willing to admit, that on our principles, and our view of the subject, insincerity would have been justifiable. I know, Sir, no plea that would justify those who are entrusted with the conduct of public affairs, in holding out to parliament and to

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the nation one object while they were, in fact, pursuing another. I did, in fact, believe, at the moment, the conclusion of peace (if it could have been obtained) to be preferable to the continuance of the war under its increasing risks and difficulties. I therefore wished for peace; I sincerely laboured for peace. Our endeavours were frustrated by the act of the enemy. If, then, the circumstances are since changed, if what passed at that period has afforded a proof that the object we aimed at was unattainable, and if all that has passed since has proved, that, if peace had been then made, it could not have been durable, are we bound to repeat the same experiment, when every reason against it is strengthened by subsequent experience, and when the inducements, which led to it at that time, have ceased to exist.

When we consider the resources and the spirit of the country, can any man doubt that if adequate security is not now to be obtained by treaty, we have the means of prosecuting the contest without material difficulty or danger, and with a reasonable prospect of completely attaining our object? I will not dwell on the improved state of public credit, on the continually increasing amount (in spite of extraordinary temporary burthens) of our permanent revenue, on the yearly accession of wealth to a degree unprecedented even in the most flourishing times of peace, which we are deriving, in the midst of war, from our extended and flourishing commerce: on the progressive improvement and growth of our manufactures; on the proofs which we see on all sides, of the uninterrupted accumulation of productive capital; and on the active exertion of every branch of national industry, which can tend to support and augment the population, the riches, and the power of the country.

As little need I recall the attention of the House to the additional means of action which we have derived from the great augmentation of our disposable military force, the continued triumphs of our powerful and victorious navy, and the events, which, in the course of the last two years, have raised the military ardour and military glory of the country to a height unexampled in any period of our history.

In addition to these grounds of reliance on our own strength and exertions, we have seen the consummate skill and valour of the arms of our allies proved by that series of unexampled success which distinguished the last campaign, and we have every reason to expect a co-operation on the continent, even to a greater extent, in the course of the present year. If we compare this view of our own situation with every thing we can observe of the state and condition of our enemy: if we can trace him labouring under equal difficulty in finding men to recruit his army, or money to pay it; if we know that in the course of the last year the most rigorous efforts of military conscription were scarcely sufficient to replace to the French armies, at the end of the campaign, the numbers which they had lost in the course of it; if we have seen that the force of the enemy, then in possession of advantages which it has since lost, was unable to contend with the efforts of the combined armies; if we know that, even while supported by the plunder of all the countries which they had overrun, the French armies were reduced, by the confession of their commanders, to the extremity of distress, and destitute, not only of the principal articles of military supply, but almost of the necessaries of life; if we see them now driven back within their own frontiers, and confined within a country whose own resources have long since been proclaimed by their successive governments to be unequal either to paying or maintaining them; if we observe, that since the last revolution, no one substantial or effectual measure has been adopted to remedy the intolerable disorder of their finances, and to supply the deficiency of their credit and resources; if we see through large and populous districts of France, either open war levied against the present usurpation, or evident marks of disunion and distraction, which the first occasion may call forth into a flame; if I say, Sir, this comparison be just, I feel myself authorized to conclude from it, not that we are entitled to consider ourselves certain of ultimate success, not that we are to suppose ourselves exempted from the unforeseen vicissitudes of war; but that, considering the value of the object for which we are contending, the means for supporting the contest, and the probable course of human events, we should be inexcusable, if at this moment we were to relinquish the struggle on any grounds short of entire and complete security against the greatest danger which has ever yet threatened the world; that

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from perseverance in our efforts under such circumstances, we have the fairest reason to expect the full attainment of that object; but that, at all events, even if we are disappointed in our more sanguine hopes, we are more likely to gain than to lose by the continuation of the contest; that every month to which it is continued, even if it should not, in its effects, lead to the final destruction of the Jacobin system, must tend so far to weaken and exhaust it, as to give us at least a greater comparative security in any other termination of the war; that on all these ground, this is not the moment at which it is consistent with our interest or our duty to listen to any proposals of negotiation with the present ruler of France; but that we are not therefore pledged to any unalterable determination as to our future conduct; that in this we must be regulated by the course of events; and that it will be the duty of his majesty's ministers from time to time to adapt their measures to any variation of circumstances, to consider how far the effects of the military operations of the allies or of the internal disposition of France correspond with our present expectations; and, on a view of the whole, to compare the difficulties or risks which may arise in the prosecution of the contest, with the prospect of ultimate success, or of the degree of advantage to be derived from its farther continuance, and to be governed by the result of all these considerations, in the opinion and advice which they may offer to their sovereign.

Mr. *Fox* rose and said:—Mr. Speaker; at so late an hour of the night, I am sure you will do me the justice to believe that I do not mean to go at length into the discussion of this great question. Exhausted as the attention of the House must be, and unaccustomed as I have been of late to attend in my place, nothing but a deep sense of my duty could have induced me to trouble you at all, and particularly to request your indulgence at such an hour. Sir, my hon. and learned friend has truly said, that the present is a new æra in the war. The right hon. the chancellor of the exchequer feels the justice of the remark; for by travelling back to the commencement of the war, and referring to all the topics and arguments which he has so often and so successfully urged to the House, and by which he has drawn them on to the support of his measures, he is forced to acknowledge, that, at the end of a seven years' conflict, we are come but to a new æra in the war, at which he thinks it necessary only to press all his former arguments to induce us to persevere. All the topics which have so often misled us—all the reasoning which has so invariably failed—all the lofty predictions which have so constantly been falsified by events—all the hopes which have amused the sanguine, and all the assurances of the distress and weakness of the enemy which have satisfied the unthinking, are again enumerated and advanced as arguments for our continuing the war. What! at the end of seven years of the most burdensome and the most calamitous struggle that this country was ever engaged in, are we again to be amused with notions of finance and calculations of the exhausted resources of the enemy, as a ground of confidence and of hope? Gracious God? Were we not told, five years ago, that France was not only on the brink, but that she was actually in the gulf of bankruptcy? Were we not told, as an unanswerable argument against treating, that she could not hold out another campaign—that nothing but peace could save her—that she wanted only time to recruit her exhausted finances—that to grant her repose, was to grant her the means of again molesting this country, and that we had nothing to do but persevere for a short time, in order to save ourselves for ever from the consequences of her ambition and her Jacobinism? What! after having gone on from year to year upon assurances like these, and after having seen the repeated refutations of every prediction, are we again to be seriously told, that we have the same prospect of success on the same identical grounds? And without any other argument or security, are we invited, at this new æra of the war, to carry it on upon principles which, if adopted, may make it eternal? If the right hon. gentleman shall succeed in prevailing on parliament and the country to adopt the principles which he has advanced this night, I see no possible termination to the contest. No man can see an end to it; and upon the assurances and predictions which have so uniformly failed, are we called upon, not merely to refuse all negotiation, but to countenance principles and views as distant from wisdom and justice, as they are in their nature wild and impracticable.

I must lament, Sir, in common with

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every friend of peace, the harsh and unconciliating language which ministers have held towards the French, and which they have even made use of in their answer to a respectful offer of negotiation. Such language has ever been considered as extremely unwise, and has ever been reprobated by diplomatic men. I remember with pleasure the terms in which lord Malmesbury at Paris, in the year 1796, replied to expressions of this sort, used by M. de la Croix. He justly said, "that offensive and injurious insinuations were only calculated to throw new obstacles in the way of accommodation, and that it was not by revolting reproaches, nor by reciprocal invective, that a sincere wish to accomplish the great work of pacification could be evinced." Nothing could be more proper nor more wise than this language; and such ought ever to be the tone and conduct of men entrusted with the very important task of treating with an hostile nation. Being a sincere friend to peace, I must say with lord Malmesbury, that it is not by reproaches and by invective that we can hope for a reconciliation; and I am convinced in my own mind, that I speak the sense of this House, and of a majority of the people of this country, when I lament that any unnecessary recriminations should be flung out, by which obstacles are put in the way of pacification. I believe that it is the prevailing sentiment of the people, that we ought to abstain from harsh and insulting language; and in common with them I must lament, that both in the papers of lord Grenville, and in the speeches of this night, such licence has been given to the invective and reproach. For the same reason I must lament, that the right hon. gentleman has thought proper to go at such length, and with such severity of minute investigation, into all the early circumstances of the war, which, whatever they were, are nothing to the present purpose, and ought not to influence the present feelings of the House.

I certainly shall not follow him into all the minute detail, though I do not agree with him in many of his assertions. I do not know what impression his narrative may make on other gentlemen; but I will tell him, fairly and candidly, he has not convinced me. I continue to think, and until I see better grounds for changing my opinion than any that the right hon. gentleman has this night produced, I shall continue to think and to say, plainly and explicitly, that this country was the aggressor in the war. But with regard to Austria and Prussia—is there a man who, for one moment, can dispute that they were the aggressors? It will be vain for the right hon. gentlemen to enter into long and plausible reasoning against the evidence of documents so clear, so decisive—so frequently, so thoroughly investigated. The unfortunate Louis 16th himself, as well as those who were in his confidence, have borne decisive testimony to the fact, that between him and the emperor, there was an intimate correspondence, and a perfect understanding. Do I mean by this that a positive treaty was entered into for the dismemberment of France? Certainly not; but no man can read the declarations which were made at Mantua, as well as at Pilnitz, as they are given by M. Bertrand de Moleville, without acknowledging that there was not merely an intention, but a declaration of an intention, on the part of the great powers of Germany, to interfere in the internal affairs of France, for the purpose of regulating the government against the opinion of the people. *This*, though not a plan for the partition of France, was, in the eye of reason and common sense, an aggression against France. The right hon. gentleman denies that there was such a thing as a treaty of Pilnitz. Granted. But was there not a declaration which amounted to an act of hostile aggression? The two powers, the emperor of Germany and the king of Prussia, made a public declaration, that they were determined to employ their forces, in conjunction with those of the other sovereigns of Europe, "to put the king of France in a situation to establish, in perfect liberty, the foundations of a monarchical government, equally agreeable to the rights of sovereigns, and the welfare of the French." Whenever the other princes should agree to co-operate with them, "then, and in that case, their majesties were determined to act promptly, and by mutual consent, with the forces necessary to obtain the end proposed by all of them. In the mean time they declared, that they would give orders for their troops to be ready for actual service." Now, I would ask gentlemen to lay their hands upon their hearts, and say, what the fair construction of this declaration was—whether it was not a menace and an insult to France, since, in direct

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terms, it declared, that whenever the other powers should concur, they would attack France, then at peace with them, and then employed only in domestic and internal regulations? Let us suppose the case to be that of Great Britain. Will any gentleman say, if two of the great powers should make a public declaration, that they were determined to make an attack on this kingdom as soon as circumstances should favour their intention; that they only waited for this occasion; and that in the mean time they would keep their forces ready for the purpose; that it would not be considered by the parliament and people of this country as an hostile aggression? And is there an Englishman in existence, who is such a friend to peace as to say, that the nation could retain its honour and dignity if it should sit down under such a menace? I know too well what is due to the national character of England, to believe that there would be two opinions on the case, if thus put home to our own feelings and understanding. We must, then, respect in others the indignation which such an act would excite in ourselves; and when we see it established on the most indisputable testimony, that both at Pilnitz, and at Mantua declarations were made to this effect, it is idle to say, that as far as the emperor and the king of Prussia were concerned, they were not the aggressors in the war.

"Oh! but the decree of the 19th of November 1792! that, at least," the right hon. gentleman says, "you must allow to be an act of aggression, not only against England, but against all the sovereigns of Europe." I am not one of those, Sir, who attach much interest to the general and indiscriminate provocations thrown out at random, like this resolution of the 19th of November 1792. I do not think it necessary to the dignity of any people to notice and to apply to themselves menaces flung out without particular allusion, which are always unwise in the power which uses them, and which it is still more unwise to treat with seriousness. But, if any such idle and general provocation to nations is given, either in insolence or in folly, by any government, it is a clear first principle, that an explanation is the thing, which a magnanimous nation, feeling itself aggrieved, ought to demand; and if an explanation be given which is not satisfactory, it ought clearly and distinctly to say so. There ought to be no ambiguity, no reserve, on the occasion. Now, we all know from documents on our table, that M. Chauvelin did give an explanation of this silly decree. He declared in the name of his government, "that it was never meant that the French government should favour insurrections; that the decree was applicable only to those people, who, after having acquired their liberty by conquest, should demand the assistance of the republic; but that France would respect, not only the independence of England, but also that of her allies with whom she was not at war." This was the explanation given of the offensive decree. "But this explanation was not satisfactory!" Did you say so to M. Chauvelin? Did you tell him that you were not content with this explanation? And when you dismissed him afterwards, on the death of the king, did you say that this explanation was unsatisfactory? No; you did no such thing: and I contend, that unless you demanded farther explanations, and they were refused, you have no right to urge the decree of the 19th of November as an act of aggression. In all your conferences and correspondence with M. Chauvelin, did you hold out to him what terms would satisfy you? Did you give the French the power or the means of settling the misunderstanding which that decree, or any other of the points at issue, had created? I contend, that when a nation refuses to state to another the thing which would satisfy her, she shows that she is not actuated by a desire to preserve peace between them: and I aver, that this was the case here. The Scheldt, for instance. You now say, that the navigation of the Scheldt was one of your causes of complaint. Did you explain yourself on that subject? Did you make it one of the grounds for the dismissal of M. Chauvelin. Sir, I repeat it, a nation, to justify itself in appealing to the last solemn resort, ought to prove that it had taken every possible means, consistent with dignity, to demand the reparation which would be satisfactory, and if she refused to explain what would be satisfactory, she did not do her duty, nor exonerate herself from the charge of being the aggressor.

The right hon. gentleman has this night, for the first time, produced a most important paper—the instructions which were given to his majesty's minister at the court of St. Petersburgh, about the end of the year 1792, to interest her imperial

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majesty to join her efforts with those of his Britannic majesty, to prevent, by their joint mediation, the evils of a general war. Of this paper, and of the existence of any such document, I for one, was entirely ignorant; but I have no hesitation in saying, that I completely approve of the instructions which appear to have been given; and I am sorry to see the right hon. gentleman disposed rather to take blame to himself than credit for having written it. He thinks that he shall be subject to the imputation of having been rather too slow to apprehend the dangers with which the French revolution was fraught, than that he was forward and hasty—"*Quod solum excusat, hoc solum miror in illo.*" I do not agree with him on the idea of censure. I by no means think that he was blameable for too much confidence in the good intentions of the French. I think the tenor and composition of this paper was excellent—the instructions conveyed in it wise; and that it wanted but one essential thing to have entitled it to general approbation—namely, to be acted upon. The clear nature and intent of that paper, I take to be, that our ministers were to solicit the court of Petersburgh to join with them in a declaration to the French government, stating explicitly what course of conduct, with respect to their foreign relations, they thought necessary to the general peace and security of Europe, and what, if complied with, would have induced them to mediate for that purpose—a proper, wise, and legitimate course of proceeding. Now, I ask, Sir, whether, if this paper had been communicated to Paris at the end of the year 1792, instead of Petersburgh, it would not have been productive of most seasonable benefits to mankind; and, by informing the French in time of the means by which they might have secured the mediation of Great Britain, have not only avoided the rupture with this country, but have also restored general peace to the continent? The paper, Sir, was excellent in its intentions; but its merit was all in the composition. It was a fine theory, which ministers did not think proper to carry into practice. Nay, on the contrary, at the very time they were drawing up this paper, they were insulting M. Chauvelin, in every way, until about the 23rd or 24th of January 1793, when they finally dismissed him, without stating any one ground upon which they were willing to preserve terms with the French.

"But France," it seems, "then declared war against us; and she was the aggressor, because the declaration came from her." Let us look at the circumstances of this transaction on both sides. Undoubtedly, the declaration was made by her; but is a declaration the only thing that constitutes the commencement of a war? Do gentlemen recollect, that, in consequence of a dispute about the commencement of war, respecting the capture of a number of ships, an article was inserted in our treaty with France, by which it was positively stipulated, that in future, to prevent all disputes, the act of the dismissal of a minister from either of the two courts should be held and considered as tantamount to a declaration of war? I mention this, Sir, because, when we are idly employed in this retrospect of the origin of a war which has lasted so many years, instead of fixing our eyes only to the contemplation of the means of putting an end to it, we seem disposed to overlook every thing on our own parts, and to search only for grounds of imputation on the enemy. I almost think it an insult on the House to detain them with this sort of examination. If, Sir, France was the aggressor, as the right hon. gentleman says she was throughout, why did not Prussia call upon us for the stipulated number of troops, according to the article of the defensive treaty of alliance subsisting between us, by which, in case either of the contracting parties was attacked, they had a right to demand the stipulated aid? And the same thing, again, may be asked when we were attacked. The right hon. gentleman might here accuse himself, indeed, of reserve; but it unfortunately happened, that, at the time, the point was too clear on which side the aggression lay. Prussia was too sensible that the war could not entitle her to make the demand, and that it was not a case within the scope of the defensive treaty. This is evidence worth a volume of subsequent reasoning; for if, at the time when all the facts were present to their minds, they could not take advantage of existing treaties, and that, too, when the courts were on the most friendly terms with one another, it will be manifest to every thinking man that they were sensible they were not authorized to make the demand.

I really, Sir, cannot think it necessary to follow the right hon. gentleman into all the minute details which he has thought proper to give us respecting the first ag-

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gression; but, that Austria and Prussia were the aggressors, not a man in any country, who has ever given himself the trouble to think at all on the subject, can doubt. Nothing could be more hostile than their whole proceedings. Did they not declare to France, that it was their internal concerns not their external proceedings, which provoked them to confederate against her? Look back to the proclamations with which they set out. Read the declarations which they made themselves to justify their appeal to arms. They did not pretend to fear their ambition, their conquests, their troubling their neighbours; but they accused them of new-modelling their own government. They said nothing of their aggressions abroad; they spoke only of their clubs and societies at Paris.

Sir, in all this, I am not justifying the French—I am not striving to absolve them from blame, either in their internal or external policy. I think, on the contrary, that their successive rulers have been as bad and as execrable, in various instances, as any of the most despotic and unprincipled governments that the world ever saw. I think it impossible, Sir, that it should have been otherwise. It was not to be expected that the French, when once engaged in foreign wars, should not endeavour to spread destruction around them, and to form plans of aggrandizement and plunder on every side. Men bred in the school of the House of Bourbon could not be expected to act otherwise. They could not have lived so long under their ancient masters, without imbibing the restless ambition, the perfidy, and the insatiable spirit of the race. They have imitated the practice of their great prototype, and, through their whole career of mischief and of crimes, have done no more than servilely trace the steps of their own Louis 14th. If they have over-run countries and ravaged them, they have done it upon Bourbon principles. If they have ruined and dethroned sovereigns, it is entirely after the Bourbon manner. If they have even fraternized with the people of foreign countries, and pretended to make their cause their own, they have only faithfully followed the Bourbon example. They have constantly had Louis, the grand monarque, in their eye. But it may be said, that this example was long ago, and that we ought not to refer to a period so distant. True, it is a distant period as applied to the man, but not so to the principle. The principle was never extinct; nor has its operation been suspended in France, except, perhaps, for a short interval, during the administration of cardinal Fleury; and my complaint against the republic of France is, not that she has generated new crimes, not that she has promulgated new mischief, but that she has adopted and acted upon the principles which have been so fatal to Europe, under the practice of the House of Bourbon. It is said, that wherever the French have gone, they have introduced revolution; that they have sought for the means of disturbing neighbouring states, and have not been content with mere conquest. What is this but adopting the ingenious scheme of Louis 14th? He was not content with merely over-running a state;—whenever he came into a new territory, he established what he called his Chamber of Claims; a most convenient device, by which he inquired, whether the conquered country or province had any dormant or disputed claims, any cause of complaint, any unsettled demand upon any other state or province—upon which he might wage war upon such state, thereby discover again ground for new devastation, and gratify his ambition by new acquisitions. What have the republicans done more atrocious, more jacobinical, than this? Louis went to war with Holland. His pretext was, that Holland had not treated him with sufficient respect;—a very just and proper cause for war indeed! This, Sir, leads me to an example which I think seasonable, and worthy the attention of his majesty's ministers. When our Charles 2nd, as a short exception to the policy of his reign, made the triple alliance for the protection of Europe, and particularly of Holland, against the ambition of Louis 14th, what was the conduct of that great, virtuous, and most able statesman, M. de Witt, when the confederates came to deliberate on the terms upon which they should treat with the French monarch? When it was said, that he had made unprincipled conquests, and that he ought to be forced to surrender them all, what was the language of that great and wise man? "No," said he; "I think we ought not to look back to the origin of the war, so much as to the means of putting an end to it. If you had united in time to prevent these conquests, well; but, now that he has made them, he stands upon the ground of conquest, and we must agree to treat with him, not with

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reference to the origin of the conquest, but with regard to his present posture. He has those places, and some of them we must be content to give up as the means of peace, for conquest will always successfully set up its claims to indemnification." Such was the language of this minister, who was the ornament of his time; and such, in my mind, ought to be the language of statesmen, with regard to the French, at this day. The same ought to have been said at the formation of the confederacy. It was true that the French had over-run Savoy; but they had over-run it upon Bourbon principles; and having gained this and other conquests before the confederacy was formed, they ought to have treated with her rather for future security, than for past correction. States in possession, whether monarchical or republican, will claim indemnity in proportion to their success; and it will never be so much inquired, by what right they gained possession, as by what means they can be prevented from enlarging their depredations. Such is the safe practice of the world; and such ought to have been the conduct of the powers when the reduction of Savoy made them coalesce.

The right hon. gentleman may know more of the secret particulars of their over-running Savoy than I do; but certainly, as they have come to my knowledge, it was a most Bourbon-like act. A great and justly celebrated historian, whom I will not call a foreigner—I mean Mr. Hume (a writer, certainly estimable in many particulars, but who was a childish lover of princes)—talks of Louis 14th, in very magnificent terms; but he says of him, that, though he managed his enterprizes with skill and bravery, he was unfortunate in this, that he never got a good and fair pretence for war. This he reckons among his misfortunes! Can we say more of the republican French? In seizing on Savoy, I think they made use of the words, "*convenances morales et physiques.*" These were their reasons. A most Bourbon-like phrase! And I therefore contend, that as we never scrupled to treat with the princes of the House of Bourbon on account of their rapacity, their thirst of conquest, their violation of treaties, their perfidy, and their restless spirit, so we ought not to refuse to treat with their republican imitators. Ministers could not pretend ignorance of the unprincipled manner in which the French had seized on Savoy. The Sardinian minister complained of the aggression, and yet no stir was made about it. The courts of Europe stood by, and saw the outrage; and our minister saw it. The right hon. gentleman will in vain, therefore, exert his powers to persuade me of the interest he takes in the preservation of the rights of nations, since, at the moment when an interference might have been made with effect, no step was taken, no remonstrance made, no mediation negotiated, to stop the career of conquest. All the pretended and hypocritical sensibility for the "rights of nations, and for social order," with which we have since been stunned, cannot impose upon those who would take the trouble to look back to the period when this sensibility ought to have roused us into seasonable exertion. At that time, however, the right hon. gentleman makes it his boast, that he was prevented, by a sense of neutrality, from taking any measures of precaution on the subject. I do not give the right hon. gentleman much credit for his spirit of neutrality on the occasion. It flowed from the sense of the country at the time, the great majority of which was clearly and decidedly against all interruptions being given to the French in their desire of regulating their own internal government.

But this neutrality, which respected only the internal rights of the French, and from which the people of England would never have departed but for the impolitic and hypocritical cant which was set up to rouse their jealousy and alarm their fears, was very different from the great principle of political prudence which ought to have actuated the councils of the nation, on seeing the first steps of France towards a career of external conquest. My opinion is, that when the unfortunate king of France offered to us, in the letter delivered by M. Chauvelin and M. Talleyrand, and even intreated us to mediate between him and the allied powers of Austria and Prussia, they ought to have accepted the offer, and exerted their influence to save Europe from the consequence of a system which was then beginning to manifest itself. It was, at least, a question of prudence; and as we had never refused to treat and to mediate with the old princes on account of their ambition or their perfidy, we ought to have been equally ready now, when the same principles were acted upon by other men. I must doubt the sensibility which could be so cold and so indifferent at the proper moment for its activity. I fear

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that there was at that moment the germs of ambition rising in the mind of the right hon. gentleman, and that he was beginning, like others, to entertain hopes that something might be obtained out of the coming confusion. What but such a sentiment could have prevented him from overlooking the fair occasion that was offered for preventing the calamities with which Europe was threatened? What but some such interested principle could have made him forego the truly honourable task, by which his administration would have displayed its magnanimity and its power? But for some such feeling, would not this country, both in wisdom and in dignity, have interfered, and in conjunction with the other powers, have said to France, "You ask for a mediation; we will mediate with candour and sincerity, but we will at the same time declare to you our apprehensions. We do not trust to your assertion of a determination to avoid all foreign conquest, and that you are desirous only of settling your own constitution, because your language is contradicted by experience and the evidence of facts. You are Frenchmen, and you cannot so soon have thrown off the Bourbon principles in which you were educated. You have already imitated the bad practice of your princes; you have seized on Savoy, without a colour of right. But here we take our stand. Thus far you have gone, and we cannot help it; but you must go no farther. We will tell you distinctly what we shall consider as an attack on the balance and the security of Europe; and, as the condition of our interference, we will tell you also the securities that we think essential to the general repose." This ought to have been the language of his majesty's ministers when their mediation was solicited; and something of this kind they evidently thought of when they sent the instructions to Petersburgh which they have mentioned this night, but upon which they never acted. Having not done so, I say, they have no claim to talk now about the violated rights of Europe, about the aggression of the French, and about the origin of the war, in which this country was so suddenly afterwards plunged. Instead of this, what did they do? They hung back; they avoided explanation; they gave the French no means of satisfying them; and I repeat my proposition—when there is a question of peace and war between two nations, that government feels itself in the wrong which refuses to state with clearness and precision what she would consider as a satisfaction and a pledge of peace.

Sir, if I understand the true precepts of the Christian religion, as set forth in the New Testament, I must be permitted to say, that there is no such thing as a rule or doctrine by which we are directed, or can be justified, in waging a war for religion. The idea is subversive of the very foundations upon which it stands, which are those of peace and good-will among men. Religion never was, and never can be, a justifiable cause of war; but it has been too often grossly used as the pretext and the apology for the most unprincipled wars.

I have already said, and I repeat it, that the conduct of the French to foreign nations cannot be justified. They have given great cause of offence, but certainly not to all countries alike. The right hon. gentlemen opposite to me have made an indiscriminate catalogue of all the countries which the French have offended, and, in their eagerness to throw odium on the nation, have taken no pains to investigate the sources of their several quarrels. I will not detain the House, by entering into the long detail which has been given of their aggressions and their violences; but let me mention Sardinia as one instance which has been strongly insisted upon. Did the French attack Sardinia when at peace with them? No such thing. The king of Sardinia had accepted of a subsidy from Great Britain; and Sardinia was, to all intents and purposes, a belligerent power. Several other instances might be mentioned; but though, perhaps, in the majority of instances, the French may be unjustifiable, is this the moment for us to dwell upon these enormities—to waste our time, and inflame our passions, by recriminating upon each other? There is no end to such a war. I have somewhere read, I think in sir Walter Raleigh's History of the World, of a most bloody and fatal battle which was fought by two opposite armies, in which almost all the combatants on both sides were killed, "because," says the historian, "though they had offensive weapons on both sides, they had none for defence." So, in this war of words, if we are to use only offensive weapons, if we are to indulge only in invective and abuse, the contest must be eternal. If this war of reproach and invective is to be countenanced, may not

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the French with equal reason complain of the outrages and the horrors committed by the powers opposed to them? If we must not treat with the French on account of the iniquity of their former transactions, ought we not to be as scrupulous of connecting ourselves with other powers equally criminal? Surely, Sir, if we must be thus rigid in scrutinizing the conduct of an enemy, we ought to be equally careful in not committing our honour and our safety with an ally who has manifested the same want of respect for the rights of other nations. Surely, if it is material to know the character of a power with whom you are only about to treat for peace, it is more material to know the character of allies, with whom you are about to enter into the closest connexion of friendship, and for whose exertions you are about to pay.

Now, Sir, what was the conduct of your own allies to Poland? Is there a single atrocity of the French, in Italy, in Switzerland, in Egypt if you please, more unprincipled and inhuman, than that of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, in Poland? What has there been in the conduct of the French to foreign powers; what in the violation of solemn treaties; what in the plunder, devastation, and dismemberment of unoffending countries; what in the horrors and murders perpetrated upon the subdued victims of their rage in any district which they have over-run, worse than the conduct of those three great powers, in the miserable, devoted, and trampled-on kingdom of Poland, and who have been, or are, our allies in this war for religion, social order, and the rights of nations? "Oh! but we regretted the partition of Poland!" Yes, regretted! you regretted the violence, and that is all you did. You united yourselves with the actors; you, in fact, by your acquiescence, confirmed the atrocity. But they are your allies; and though they overran and divided Poland, there was nothing, perhaps, in the manner of doing it, which stamped it with peculiar infamy and disgrace. The hero of Poland, perhaps, was merciful and mild: He was "as much superior to Buonaparté in bravery, and in the discipline which he maintained, as he was superior in virtue and humanity! He was animated by the purest principles of christianity and was restrained in his career by the benevolent precepts which it inculcates." Was he? Let unfortunate Warsaw, and the miserable inhabitants of the suburb of Praga in particular, tell! What do we understand to have been the conduct of this magnanimous hero, with whom, it seems, Buonaparté is not to be compared? He entered the suburb of Praga, the most populous suburb of Warsaw; and there he let his soldiery loose on the miserable, unarmed, and unresisting people! Men, women, and children, nay, infants at the breast, were doomed to one indiscriminate massacre! Thousands of them were inhumanly, wantonly, butchered! And for what? Because they had dared to join in a wish to meliorate their own condition as a people, and to improve their constitution, which had been confessed by their own sovereign to be in want of amendment. And such is the hero upon whom the cause of "religion and social order" is to repose! And such is the man whom we praise for his discipline and his virtue, and whom we hold out as our boast and our dependence, while the conduct of Buonaparté unfits him to be even treated with as an enemy!

But the behaviour of the French towards Switzerland raises all the indignation of the right hon. gentleman and inflames his eloquence. I admire the indignation which he expresses (and I think he felt it) in speaking of this country, so dear and so congenial to every man who loves the sacred name of liberty. He who loves liberty, says the right hon. gentleman, thought himself at home on the favoured and happy mountains of Switzerland, where she seemed to have taken up her abode under a sort of implied compact, among all other states, that she should not be disturbed in this her chosen asylum. I admire the eloquence of the right hon. gentleman in speaking of this country of liberty and peace, to which every man would desire, once in his life at least, to make a pilgrimage. But who, let me ask him, first proposed to the Swiss people to depart from the neutrality which was their chief protection, and to join the confederacy against the French? I aver, that a noble relation of mine (lord Robert Fitzgerald) then the minister of England to the Swiss Cantons, was instructed, in direct terms, to propose to the Swiss, by an official note, to break from the safe line they had laid down for themselves, and to tell them, "in such a contest neutrality was criminal." I know that noble lord too well, though I have not been in habits of intercourse with him of late,

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from the employments in which he has been engaged, to suspect that he would have presented such a paper without the express instructions of his court, or that he would have gone beyond those instructions.

But, was it only to Switzerland that this sort of language was held? What was our language also to Tuscany and to Genoa? An hon. gentleman (Mr. Canning) has denied the authenticity of a pretended letter which has been circulated, and ascribed to lord Harvey. He says, it is all a fable and a forgery. Be it so; but is it also a fable that lord Harvey did speak in terms to the grand duke, which he considered as offensive and insulting? I cannot tell, for I was not present. But was it not, and is it not believed? Is it a fable that lord Harvey went into the closet of the grand duke, laid his watch upon the table, and demanded in a peremptory manner, that he should within a certain number of minutes, I think I have heard within a quarter of an hour, determine, aye or no, to dismiss the French minister, and order him out of his dominions; with the menace, that if he did not, the English fleet should bombard Leghorn? Will the hon. gentleman deny this also? I certainly do not know it from my own knowledge; but I know, that persons of the first credit, then at Florence, have stated these facts, and that they never have been contradicted, It is true, that upon the grand duke's complaint of this indignity, lord Harvey was recalled; but was the principle recalled? Was the mission recalled? Did not ministers persist in the demand which lord Harvey had made, perhaps ungraciously? Was not the grand duke forced, in consequence, to dismiss the French minister? and did they not drive him to enter into an unwilling war with the republic? It is true that he afterwards made his peace; and that, having done so, he was treated severely and unjustly by the French. But what do I conclude from all this, but that we have no right to be scrupulous, we who have violated the respect due to peaceable powers ourselves, in this war, which, more than any other that ever afflicted human nature, has been distinguished by the greatest number of disgusting and outrageous insults to the smaller powers by the great. And I infer from this also, that the instances not being confined to the French, but having been perpetrated by every one of the allies, and by England as much as by the others, we have no right to refuse to treat with the French on this ground. Need I speak of your conduct to Genoa also? Perhaps the note delivered by Mr. Drake was also a forgery. Perhaps the blockade of the port never took place. It is impossible to deny the facts, which were so glaring at the time. It is a painful thing to me, Sir, to be obliged to go back to these unfortunate periods of the history of this war, and of the conduct of this country: but I am forced to the task by the use which has been made of the atrocities of the French as an argument against negotiation. I think I have said enough to prove, that if the French have been guilty, we have not been innocent. Nothing but determined incredulity can make us deaf and blind to our own acts, whenwe are so ready to yield an assent to all the reproaches which are thrown out on the enemy, and upon which reproaches we are gravely told to continue the war.

"But the French," it seems, "have behaved ill every where. They seized on Venice, which had preserved the most exact neutrality, or rather," as it is hinted, "had manifested symptoms of friendship to them." I agree with the right hon. gentleman, it was an abominable act. I am not the apologist of, much less the advocate for, their iniquities; neither will I countenance them in their pretences for the injustice. I do not think that much regard is to be paid to the charges which a triumphant soldiery bring on the conduct of a people whom they have over-run. Pretences for outrage will never be wanting to the strong, when they wish to trample on the weak; but when we accuse the French of having seized upon Venice, after stipulating for its neutrality and guaranteeing its independence, we should also remember the excuse that they made for violence; namely, that their troops had been attacked and murdered. I say I am always incredulous about such excuses; but I think it fair to hear whatever can be alleged on the other side. We cannot take one side of a story only. Candour demands that we should examine the whole before we make up our minds on the guilt. I cannot think it quite fair to state the view of the subject of one party as indisputable fact, without even mentioning what the other party has to say for itself. But, Sir, is this all? Though the perfidy

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of the French to the Venetians be clear and palpable, was it worse in morals, in principle, and in example, than the conduct of Austria? My hon. friend (Mr. Whitbread) properly asked, "Is not the receiver as bad as the thief?" If the French seized on the territory of Venice, did not the Austrians agree to receive it? "But this," it seems, "is not the same thing." It is quite in the nature, and within the rule of diplomatic morality, for Austria to receive the country which was seized upon unjustly. "The emperor took it as a compensation: it was his by barter: he was not answerable for the guilt by which it was obtained." What is this, Sir, but the false and abominable reasoning with which we have been so often disgusted on the subject of the Slave trade? Just in the same manner have I heard a notorious wholesale dealer in this inhuman traffic justify his abominable trade. "I am not guilty of the horrible crime of tearing that mother from her infants; that husband from his wife; of depopulating that village; of depriving that family of their sons, the support of their aged parent! No: thank heaven! I am not guilty of this horror; I only bought them in the fair way of trade. They were brought to the market; they had been guilty of crimes, or they had been made prisoners in war; they were accused of witchcraft, of obi, or of some other sort of sorcery; and they were brought to me for sale; I gave a valuable consideration for them; but God forbid that I should have stained my soul with the guilt of dragging them from their friends and families!" Such has been the precious defence of the Slave trade; and such is the argument set up for Austria, in this instance of Venice. "I did not commit the crime of trampling on the independence of Venice. I did not seize on the city; I gave a *quid pro quo*. It was a matter of barter and indemnity; I gave half a million of human beings to be put under the yoke of France in another district, and I had these people turned over to me in return!" This, Sir, is the defence of Austria; and under such detestable sophistry as this, is the infernal traffic in human flesh, whether in white or black, to be continued, and even justified! At no time has that diabolical traffic been carried to a greater length than during the present war; and that by England herself as well as Austria and Russia.

"But France," it seems, "has roused all the nations of Europe against her;" and the long catalogue has been read to you, to prove that she must have been atrocious to provoke them all. Is it true, Sir, that she has roused them all? It does not say much for the address of his majesty's ministers, if this be the case. What, Sir, have all your negotiations, all your declamation, all your money, been squandered in vain? Have you not succeeded in stirring the indignation, and engaging the assistance, of a single power? But you do yourselves injustice. I dare say the truth lies between you, Between their crimes and your money the rage has been excited; and full as much is due to your seductions, as to her atrocities. My learned friend was correct, therefore, in his argument; for you cannot take both sides of the case: you cannot accuse them of having provoked all Europe, and at the same time claim the merit of having roused them to join you.

You talk of your allies. Sir, I wish to know who your allies are? Russia is one of them I suppose. Did France attack Russia? Has the magnanimous Paul taken the field for social order and religion, on account of personal aggression? The emperor of Russia has declared himself grand master of Malta, though his religion is as opposite to that of the knights as ours is; and he is as much considered an heretic by the church of Rome as we are. The king of Great Britain might, with as much propriety, declare himself the head of the order of the Chartreuse monks. Not content with taking to himself the commandery of this institution of Malta, Paul has even created a married man a knight, contrary to all the most sacred rules and regulations of the order. And yet this ally of ours is fighting for religion!—So much for his religion: Let us see his regard to social order! How does he show his abhorrence of the principles of the French, in their violation of the rights of other nations? What has been his conduct to Denmark? He says to Denmark—"You have seditious clubs at Copenhagen — No Danish vessel shall enter the ports of Russia!" He holds a still more despotic language to Hamburgh. He threatens to lay an embargo on their trade; and he forces them to surrender up men who are claimed by the French as their citizens—whether truly or not, I do not inquire. He threatens them with his own vengeance if they refuse, and subjects them to that of the

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French if they comply. And what has been his conduct to Spain? He first sends away the Spanish minister from Petersburgh, and then complains, as a great insult that his minister was dismissed from Madrid! This is one of our allies; and he has declared that the object for which he has taken up arms is, to replace the ancient race of the House of Bourbon on the throne of France, and that he does this for the cause of religion and social order! Such is the respect for religion and social order which he himself displays; and such are the examples of it with which we coalesce!

No man regrets, Sir, more than I do, the enormities that France has committed; but how do they bear upon the question as it now stands? Are we for ever to deprive ourselves of the benefits of peace, because France has perpetrated acts of injustice? Sir, we cannot acquit ourselves upon such ground. We have negotiated. With the knowledge of these acts of injustice and disorder, we have treated with them twice; yet, the right hon. gentleman cannot enter into negotiation with them now; and it is worth while to attend to the reasons that he gives for refusing their offer. The revolution itself is no more an objection now, than it was in 1796, when he did negotiate; for the government of France at that time was surely as unstable as it is now. The crimes of the French, the instability of their government, did not then prevent him: and why are they to prevent him now? He negotiated with a government as unstable, and, baffled in that negotiation, he did not scruple to open another at Lisle in 1797. We have heard a very curious account of these negotiations this day, and, as the right hon. gentleman has emphatically told us, an "honest" account of them. He says he has no scruple in avowing that he apprehended danger from the success of his own efforts to procure a pacification, and that he was not displeased at its failure. He was sincere in his endeavours to treat, but he was not disappointed when they failed. I wish to understand the right hon. gentleman correctly. His declaration on the subject, then, I take to be this—that though sincere in his endeavours to procure peace in 1797, yet he apprehended greater danger from accomplishing his object, than from the continuance of war; and that he felt this apprehension from the comparative views of the probable state of peace and war at that time. I have no hesitation in allowing the fact, that a state of peace, immediately after a war of such violence, must, in some respects, be a state of insecurity; but does this not belong, in a certain degree, to all wars? And are we never to have peace, because that peace may be insecure? But there was something, it seems, so peculiar in this war, and in the character and principles of the enemy, that the right hon. gentleman thought a peace in 1797 would be comparatively more dangerous than war. Why, then, did he treat? I beg the attention of the House to this—He treated, "because the unequivocal sense of the people of England was declared to be in favour of a negotiation." The right hon. gentleman confesses the truth, then, that in 1797 the people were for peace. I thought so at the time: but you all recollect, that when I stated it in my place, it was denied. "True," they said, "you have procured petitions; but we have petitions too: we all know in what strange ways petitions may be procured, and how little they deserve to be considered as the sense of the people." This was their language at the time; but, now we find these petitions did speak the sense of the people, and that it was on this side of the House only, that the sense of the people was spoken. The majority spoke a contrary language. It is acknowledged, then, that the unequivocal sense of the people of England may be spoken by the minority of this House, and that it is not always by the test of numbers that an honest decision is to be ascertained. This House decided against what the right hon. gentleman knew to be the sense of the country; but he himself acted upon that sense against the vote of parliament.

The negotiation in 1796 went off, as my learned friend has said, upon the question of Belgium, or, as the right hon. gentleman asserts, upon a question of principle. He negotiated to please the people, but it went off "on account of a monstrous principle advanced by France incompatible with all negotiation." This is now said. Did the right hon. gentleman say so at the time? Did he fairly and candidly inform the people of England, that they broke off the negotiation because the French had urged a basis that it was totally impossible for England at any time to grant? No such thing. On the contrary, when the negotiation broke off, they published a manifesto, "renewing in the

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face of Europe, the solemn declaration, that whenever the enemy should be disposed to enter on the work of a general pacification, in a spirit of conciliation and equity, nothing should be wanting on their part to contribute to the accomplishment of that great object." And, accordingly, in 1797, notwithstanding this incompatible principle, and with all the enormities of the French on their heads, they opened a new negotiation at Lisle. They do not wait for any retractation of this incompatible principle; they do not wait even till overtures shall be made to them; but they solicit and renew a negotiation themselves. I do not blame them for this, Sir; I say only that it is an argument against the assertion of an incompatible principle. It is a proof, that they did not then think as the right hon. gentleman now says they thought; but that they yielded to the sentiments of the nation, who were generally inclined to peace, against their own judgment; and, from a motive which I shall come to by-and-by, they had no hesitation, on account of the first rupture, to renew the negotiation—it was renewed at Lisle; and this the French broke off, after the revolution at Paris on the 4th of September. What was the conduct of ministers upon this occasion? One would have thought, that, with the fresh insult at Lisle in their minds, with the recollection of their failure the year before at Paris, if it had been true that they found an incompatible principle, they would have talked a warlike language, and would have announced to their country and to all Europe, that peace was not to be obtained; that they must throw away the scabbard, and think only of the means of continuing the contest. No such thing. They put forth a declaration, in which they said, that they should look with anxious expectation for the moment when the government of France should show a disposition and spirit corresponding with their own; and renewing before all Europe the solemn declaration, that at the very moment when the brilliant victory of lord Duncan might have justified them in demanding more extravagant terms, they were willing, if the calamities of war could be closed, to conclude peace on the same moderate and equitable principles and terms which they had before proposed. Such was their declaration upon that occasion; and in the discussions which we had upon it in this House, ministers were explicit. They said, that by that negotiation, there had been given to the world what might be regarded as an unequivocal test of the sincerity and disposition of government towards, or peace against it; for those who refuse discussion, show that they are disinclined to pacification; and it is therefore, they said, always to be considered as a test, that the party who refuses to negotiate, is the party who is disinclined to peace. This they themselves set up as the test. Try them now, Sir, by that test. An offer is made them. They rashly, and I think rudely, refuse it. Have they, or have they not, broken their own test?

But, they say, "we have not refused all discussion." They have put a case. They have expressed a wish for the restoration of the house of Bourbon, and have declared that to be an event which would immediately remove every obstacle to negotiation. Sir, as to the restoration of the house of Bourbon, if it shall be the wish of the people of France, I, for one, shall be perfectly content to acquiesce. I think the people of France, as well as every other people, ought to have the government which they like best themselves; and the form of that government, or the persons who hold it in their hands, should never be an obstacle with me to treat with the nation for peace, or to live with me in amity—but as an Englishman, and actuated by English feelings, I surely cannot wish for the restoration of the house of Bourbon to the throne of France. I hope that I am not a man to bear heavily upon any unfortunate family. I feel for their situation—I respect their distresses—but as a friend of England, I cannot wish for their restoration to the power which they abused. I cannot forget that the whole history of the century is little more than an account of the wars and the calamities arising from the restless ambition, the intrigues, and the perfidy of the house of Bourbon.

I cannot discover, in any part of the laboured defence which has been set up for not accepting the offer now made by France, any argument to satisfy my mind that ministers have not forfeited the test which they held out as infallible in 1797. An hon. gentleman thinks, that parliament should be eager only to approach the throne with declarations of their readiness to support his majesty in the farther prosecution of the war, without inquiry; and he is quite delighted with an address, which he has found upon the Journals, to

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king William, in which they pledged themselves to support him in his efforts to resist the ambition of Louis 14th. He thinks it quite astonishing how much it is in point, and how perfectly it applies to the present occasion. One would have thought, Sir, that in order to prove the application, he would have shown that an offer had been respectfully made by the grand monarque to king William, to treat, which he had peremptorily, and in very irritating terms, refused; and that, upon this, the House of Commons had come forward, and, with one voice, declared their determination to stand by him, with their lives and fortunes, in prosecuting the just and necessary war. Not a word of all this; and yet the hon. gentleman finds it quite a parallel case, and an exact model for the House, on this day, to pursue. I really think, Sir, he might as well have taken any other address upon the Journals, upon any other topic, as this address to king William. It would have been equally in point, and would have equally served to show the hon. gentleman's talents for reasoning.

Sir, I cannot here overlook another instance of this hon. gentleman's candid style of debating, and of his respect for parliament. He has found out, it seems, that in former periods of our history, and even in periods which have been denominated good times, intercepted letters have been published; and he reads, from the Gazette, instances of such publication. Really, Sir, if the hon. gentleman had pursued the profession to which he turned his thoughts when younger, he would have learnt that it was necessary to find cases a little more in point. And yet, full of his triumph on this notable discovery, he has chosen to indulge himself in speaking of a most respectable and a most honourable person as any that this country knows, and who is possessed of as sound an understanding as any man that I have the good fortune to be acquainted with, in terms the most offensive and disgusting, on account of words which he may be supposed to have said in another place.* He has spoken of that noble person and of his intellect, in terms which, were I disposed to retort, I might say, show the hon. gentleman to be possessed of an intellect which would justify me in passing over in silence any thing that comes from such a man. Sir, that noble person did not speak of the mere act of publishing the intercepted correspondence; and the hon. gentleman's reference to the Gazettes of former periods is, therefore, not in point. The noble duke complained of the manner in which these intercepted letters had been published, not of the fact itself of their publication; for, in the introduction and notes to those letters, the ribaldry is such, that they are not screened from the execration of every honourable mind even by their extreme stupidity. The honourable gentleman says, that he must treat with indifference the intellect of a man who can ascribe the present scarcity of corn to the war. Sir, I think there is nothing either absurd or unjust in such an opinion. Does not the war, necessarily, by its magazines, and still more by its expeditions, increase consumption? But, when we learn that corn is, at this very moment, sold in France for less than half the price which it bears here, is it not a fair thing to suppose, that, but for the war and its prohibitions, a part of that grain would be brought to this country, on account of the high price which it would sell for, and that, consequently, our scarcity would be relieved from their abundance? I speak only upon report, of course; but I see that the price quoted in the French markets is less, by one half, than the prices in England. There was nothing, therefore, very absurd in what fell from my noble friend; and I would really advise the hon. gentleman, when he speaks of persons distinguished for every virtue, to be a little more guarded in his language. I see no reason why he and his friends should not leave to persons in another place, holding the same opinions as themselves, the task of answering what may be thrown out there. Is not the phalanx sufficient? It is no great compliment to their talents, considering their number, that they cannot be left to the task of answering the few to whom they are opposed; but, perhaps, the hon. gentleman has too little to do in this House, and is to be sent there himself. In truth, I see no reason why even he might not be sent, as well as some others who have been sent there.

To return to the subject of the negotiation in 1797. It is, in my mind, extremely material to attend to the account which the right hon. gentleman gives of his memorable negotiation of 1797, and of his motives for entering into it. In all,

* The Duke of Bedford. See p. 1224.

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questions of peace and war, he says, many circumstances must necessarily enter into the consideration; and that they are not to be decided upon the extremes: the determination must be made upon a balance and comparison of the evils or the advantages upon the one side and the other, and that one of the greatest considerations is that of finance. In 1797, the right hon. gentleman confesses he found himself peculiarly embarrassed as to the resources for the war, if they were to be found in the old and usual way of the funding system. Now, though he thought, upon his balance and comparison of considerations, that the evils of war would be fewer than those of peace, yet they would only be so provided that he could establish a "new and solid system of finance" in the place of the old and exhausted funding system: and to accomplish this, it was necessary to have the unanimous approbation of the people. To procure this unanimity, he pretended to be a friend to negotiation, though he did not wish for the success of that negotiation, but hoped, only, that through that means he should bring the people to agree to his new and solid system of finance. With these views, then, what does he do? Knowing that, contrary to his declarations in this House, the opinion of the people of England was generally for peace, he enters into a negotiation, in which, as the world believed at the time, and even until this day, he completely failed—No such thing, Sir—he completely succeeded—for his object was not to gain peace; it was to gain over the people of this country to a "new and a solid system of finance"—that is, to the raising a great part of the supplies within the year, to the triple assessment, and to the tax upon income! And how did he gain them over? By pretending to be a friend of peace, which he was not; and by opening a negotiation which he secretly wished might not succeed. The right hon. gentleman says, that in all this he was honest and sincere: he negotiated fairly, and would have obtained the peace, if the French had shown a disposition correspondent to his own; but he rejoiced that their conduct was such as to convince the people of England of the necessity of concurring with him in the views which he had, and in granting him the supply which he thought essential to their posture at the time. Sir, I will not say, that in all this he was not honest to his own purpose, and that he has not been honest in his declarations and confessions this night; but I cannot agree that he was honest to this House, or honest to the people of this country. To this House it was not honest to make them counteract the sense of the people, as he knew it to be expressed in the petitions upon the table; nor was it honest to the country, to act in a disguise, and to pursue a secret purpose, unknown to them, while affecting to take the road which they pointed out. I know not whether this may not be honesty in the political ethics of the right hon. gentleman, but I know that it would be called by a very different name in the common transactions of society, and in the rules of morality established in private life. I know of nothing in the history of this country, that it resembles, except, perhaps, one of the most profligate periods—the reign of Charles 2nd, when the sale of Dunkirk might probably have been justified by the same pretence. Charles also declared war against France, and did it to cover a negotiation by which, in his difficulties, he was to gain a "solid system of finance."

But, Sir, I meet the right hon. gentleman on his own ground. I say that you ought to treat on the same principle on which you treated in 1797, in order to gain the cordial co-operation of the people. "We want experience, and the evidence of facts." Can there be any evidence of facts equal to that of a frank, open, and candid negotiation? Let us see whether Buonaparté will display the same temper as his predecessors. If he shall do so, then you will confirm the people of England in their opinion of the necessity of continuing the war, and you will revive all the vigour which you roused in 1797. Or will you not do this until you have a reverse of fortune? Will you never treat, but when you are in a situation of distress, and when you have occasion to impose on the people?

"But," you say, "we have not refused to treat." You have stated a case in which you will be ready immediately to enter into a negotiation, viz. the restoration of the House of Bourbon; but you deny that this is a *sine quâ non*; and in your nonsensical language, which I do not understand, you talk of "limited possibilities," which may induce you to treat without the restoration of the house of Bourbon. But do you state what they are? Now, Sir, I say, that if you put one case, upon which you declare that you

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are willing to treat immediately, and say that there are other possible cases which may induce you to treat hereafter, without mentioning what these possible cases are, you do state a *sine quâ non* of immediate treaty. Suppose I have an estate to sell, and I say my demand is 1000*l.* for it—I will sell the estate immediately for that sum. To be sure, there may be other terms upon which I may be willing to part with it; but I say nothing of them. The 1000*l.* is the only condition that I state now. Will any gentleman say, that I do not make the 1000*l.* the *sine quâ non* of the immediate sale? Thus, you say, the restoration of the princes is not the only possible ground; but you give no other. This is your *projet*. Do you demand a *contre projet?* Do you follow your own rule? Do you not do the thing of which you complained in the enemy? You seemed to be afraid of receiving another proposition; and by confining yourselves to this one point, you make it in fact, though not in terms, your *sine quâ non*.

But the right hon. gentleman, in his speech, does what the official note avoids —He finds there the convenient words, "experience and the evidence of facts;" upon these he goes into detail: and, in order to convince the House that new evidence is required, he goes back to all the earliest acts and crimes of the revolution—to all the atrocities of all the governments that have passed away; and he contends that he must have experience that these foul crimes are repented of, and that a purer and a better system is adopted in France, by which he may be sure that they shall be capable of maintaining the relations of peace and amity. Sir, these are not conciliatory words; nor is this a practicable ground to gain experience. Does he think it possible, that evidence of a peaceable demeanour can be obtained in war? What does he mean to say to the French consul? "Until you shall in war behave yourself in a peaceable manner, I will not treat with you."—Is there not something extremely ridiculous in this? In duels, indeed, we have often heard of this kind of language. Two gentlemen go out, and fight; when, after discharging their pistols at one another, it is not an unusual thing for one of them to say to the other—"Now I am satisfied —I see that you are a man of honour, and we are friends again." There is something by-the-bye ridiculous even in this; but between nations, it is more than ridiculous—it is criminal. It is a ground which no principle can justify, and which is as impracticable as it is impious. That two nations should be set on to beat one another into friendship, is too abominable even for the fiction of romance; but for a statesman, seriously and gravely to lay it down as a system upon which he means to act, is monstrous. What can we say of such a test as he means to put the French government to, but that it is hopeless? It is in the nature of war to inflame animosity—to exasperate, not to soothe—to widen, not to approximate. And so long as this is to be acted upon, it is vain to hope that we can have the evidence which we require.

The right hon. gentleman, however, thinks otherwise; and he points out four distinct possible cases, besides the re-establishment of the Bourbon family, in which he would agree to treat with the French.

1. "If Buonaparté shall conduct himself so as to convince him that he has abandoned the principles which were objectionable in his predecessors, and that he shall be actuated hy a more moderate system." I ask you, Sir, if this is likely to be ascertained in war? It is the nature of war not to allay but to inflame the passions; and it is not by the invective and abuse which have been thrown upon him and his government, nor by the continued irritations which war is sure to give, that the virtues of moderation and forbearance are to be nourished.

2. "If, contrary to the expectations of ministers, the people of France shall show a disposition to acquiesce in the government of Buonaparté. Does the right hon. gentleman mean to say, that because it is an usurpation on the part of the present chief, therefore the people are not likely to acquiesce in it? I have not time, Sir, to discuss the question of this usurpation, or whether it is likely to be permanent; but I certainly have not so good an opinion of the French, or of any people, as to believe that it will be short-lived, merely because it was an usurpation, and because it is a system of military despotism. Cromwell was a usurper; and in many points there may be found a resemblance between him and the present chief consul of France. There is no doubt but that, on several occasions of his life, Cromwell's sincerity may be questioned, particularly in his self-denying ordinance —in his affected piety, and other things;

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but would it not have been insanity in France and Spain to refuse to treat with him, because he was a usurper? No, Sir, these are not the maxims by which governments are actuated. They do not inquire so much into the means by which power may have been acquired, as into the fact of where the power resides. The people did acquiesce in the government of Cromwell; but it may be said, that the splendor of his talents, the vigour of his administration, the high tone with which he spoke to foreign nations, the success of his arms, and the character which he gave to the English name, induced the nation to acquiesce in his usurpation; and that we must not try Buonaparté by this example. Will it be said that Buonaparté is not a man of great abilities? Will it be said that he has not, by his victories, thrown a splendor over even the violence of the revolution, and that he does not conciliate the French people by the high and lofty tone in which he speaks to foreign nations? Are not the French, then, as likely, as the English in the case of Cromwell, to acquiesce in his government? If they should do so, the right hon. gentleman may find that this possible predicament may fail him. He may find, that though one power may make war, it requires two to make peace. He may find that Buonaparté was as insincere as himself, in the proposition which he made; and in his turn he may come forward and say—"I have no occasion now for concealment. It is true, that in the beginning of the year 1800, I offered to treat, not because I wished for peace, but because the people of France wished for it; and besides, my old resources being exhausted, and there being no means of carrying on the war without a 'new and solid system of finance,' I pretended to treat, because I wished to procure the unanimous assent of the French people to this new and solid system. Did you think I was in earnest? You were deceived. I now throw off the mask: I have gained my point; and I reject your offers with scorn." Is it not a very possible case that he may use this language? Is it not within the right hon. gentleman's "knowledge of human nature?" But even if this should not be the case, will not the very test which you require—the acquiescence of the people of France in his government—give him an advantage-ground in the negotiation which he does not possess now? Is it quite sure, that when he finds himself safe in his seat, he will treat on the same terms as now, and that you will get a better peace some time hence, than you might reasonably hope to obtain at this moment? Will he not have one interest less than at present? And do you not overlook a favourable occasion, for a chance which is extremely doubtful? These are the considerations which I would urge to his majesty's ministers, against the dangerous experiment of waiting for the acquiescence of the people of France.

3. "If the allies of this country shall be less successful than they have every reason to expect they will be, in stirring up the people of France against Buonaparté, and in the farther prosecution of the war." And,

4. "If the pressure of the war should be heavier upon us, than it would be convenient for us to continue to bear." These are the other two possible emergencies in which the right hon. gentleman would treat even with Buonaparté. Sir, I have often blamed the right hon. gentleman for being disingenuous and insincere. On the present occasion I certainly cannot charge him with any such thing. He has made to-night a most honest confession. He is open and candid. He tells Buonaparté fairly what he has to expect. "I mean," says he, "to do every thing in my power to raise up the people of France against you. I have engaged a number of allies, and our combined efforts shall be used to excite insurrection and civil war in France. I will strive to murder you, or to get you sent away. If I succeed, well; but if I fail, then I will treat with you. My resources being exhausted; even my solid system of finance having failed to supply me with the means of keeping together my allies, and of feeding the discontents I have excited in France, then you may expect to see me renounce my high tone, my attachment to the house of Bourbon, my abhorrence of your crimes, my alarm at your principles; for then I shall be ready to own, that, on the balance and comparison of circumstances, there will be less danger in concluding a peace, than in the continuance of war!" Is this a language for one state to hold to another? And what sort of peace does the right hon. gentleman expect to receive in that case? Does he think that Buonaparté would grant, to baffled insolence, to humiliated pride, to disappointment and to imbecility,

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the same terms which he would be ready to give now? The right hon. gentleman cannot have forgotten what he said on another occasion.

——" Potuit quæ plurima virtus
" Esse, fuit: toto certatum est corpore regni."

He would then have to repeat his words, but with a different application—He would have to say—all our efforts are vain—we have exhausted our strength—our designs are impracticable—and we must sue to you for peace.

Sir, what is the question this night? We are called upon to support ministers in refusing a frank, candid, and respectful offer of negotiation, and to countenance them in continuing the war. Now, I would put the question in another way. Suppose ministers had been inclined to adopt the line of conduct which they pursued in 1796 and 1797, and that to-night, instead of a question on a war-address, it had been an address to his majesty, to thank him for accepting the overture, and for opening a negotiation to treat for peace: I ask the gentlemen opposite—I appeal to the whole 558 representatives of the people—to lay their hands upon their hearts, and to say, whether they would not have cordially voted for such an address? Would they, or would they not? Yes, Sir, if the address had breathed a spirit of peace, your benches would have resounded with rejoicings, and with praises of a measure that was likely to bring back the blessings of tranquillity. On the present occasion, then, I ask for the vote of none, but of those who, in the secret confession of their conscience, admit, at this instant, while they hear me, that they would have cheerfully and heartily voted with the minister for an address directly the reverse of this. If every such gentleman were to vote with me, I should be this night in the greatest majority that ever I had the honour to vote with in this House.

Sir, we have heard to-night a great many most acrimonious invectives against Buonaparté, against the whole course of his conduct, and against the unprincipled manner in which he seized upon the reins of government. I will not make his defence—I think all this sort of invective, which is used only to inflame the passions of this House and of the country, exceedingly ill-timed, and very impolitic—but I say I will not make his defence. I am not sufficiently in possession of materials upon which to form an opinion on the character and conduct of this extraordinary man. Upon his arrival in France, he found the government in a very unsettled state, and the whole affairs of the republic deranged, crippled, and involved. He thought it necessary to reform the government; and he did reform it, just in the way in which a military man may be expected to carry on a reform—he seized on the whole authority to himself. It will not be expected from me, that I should either approve or apologize for such an act. I am certainly not for reforming governments by such expedients; but how this House can be so violently indignant at the idea of military despotism, is, I own, a little singular, when I see the composure with which they can observe it nearer home; nay, when I see them regard it as a frame of government most peculiarly suited to the exercise of free opinion, on a subject the most important of any that can engage the attention of a people. Was it not the system that was so happily and so advantageously established, of late, all over Ireland; and which, even now, the government may, at its pleasure, proclaim over the whole of that kingdom? Are not the persons and property of the people left, in many districts, at this moment, to the entire will of military commanders? And is not this held out as peculiarly proper and advantageous, at a time when the people of Ireland are freely, and with unbiassed judgment, to discuss the most interesting question of a legislative union? Notwithstanding the existence of martial law, so far do we think Ireland from being enslaved, that we think it precisely the period and the circumstances under which she may best declare her free opinion! Now, really, Sir, I cannot think that gentlemen, who talk in this way about Ireland, can, with a good grace, rail at military despotism in France.

But, it seems, " Buonaparté has broken his oaths. He has violated his oath of fidelity to the constitution of the year 3." Sir, I am not one of those who think that any such oaths ought ever to be exacted. They are seldom or ever of any effect; and I am not for sporting with a thing so sacred as an oath. I think it would be good to lay aside all such oaths. Who ever heard, that, in revolutions, the oath of fidelity to the former government was ever regarded; or even when violated, that it was imputed to the persons as a crime? In times of revolution, men who

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take up arms are called rebels—If they fail, they are adjudged to be traitors. But who ever heard before, of their being perjured? On the restoration of Charles 2nd, those who had taken up arms for the Commonwealth, were stigmatised as rebels and traitors, but not as men foresworn. Was the earl of Devonshire charged with being perjured, on account of the allegiance he had sworn to the house of Stuart, and the part he took in those struggles which preceded and brought about the Revolution? The violation of oaths of allegiance was never imputed to the people of England, and will never be imputed to any people. But who brings up the question of oaths? He who strives to make twenty-four millions of persons violate the oaths they have taken to their present constitution, and who desires to re-establish the house of Bourbon by such violation of their vows. I put it so, Sir; because, if the question of oaths be of the least consequence, it is equal on both sides. He who desires the whole people of France to perjure themselves, and who hopes for success in his project only upon their doing so, surely cannot make it a charge against Buonaparté that he has done the same.

"Ah! but Buonaparté has declared it as his opinion, that the two governments of Great Britain and of France cannot exist together. After the treaty of Campo Formio, he sent two confidential persons, Berthier and Monge, to the Directory, to say so in his name." Well, and what is there in this absurd and puerile assertion, if it was ever made? Has not the right hon. gentleman, in this House, said the same thing? In this, at least, they resemble one another. They have both made use of this assertion; and I believe, that these two illustrious persons are the only two on earth who think it. But let us turn the tables. We ought to put ourselves at times in the place of the enemy, if we are desirous of really examining with candour and fairness the dispute between us. How may they not interpret the speeches of ministers and their friends, in both Houses of the British parliament? If we are to be told of the idle speech of Berthier and Monge, may they not also bring up speeches, in which it has not been merely hinted, but broadly asserted, that "the two constitutions of England and France could not exist together?" May not these offences and charges be reciprocated without end? Are we ever to go on in this miserable squabble about words? Are we still, as we happen to be successful on the one side or other, to bring up these impotent accusations, insults, and provocations, against each other; and only when we are beaten and unfortunate to think of treating? Oh! pity the condition of man, gracious God! and save us from such a system of malevolence, in which all our old and venerated prejudices are to be done away, and by which we are to be taught to consider war as the natural state of man, and peace but as a dangerous and difficult extremity?

Sir, this temper must be corrected. It is a diabolical spirit, and would lead to interminable war. Our history is full of instances, that where we have overlooked a proffered occasion to treat, we have uniformly suffered by delay. At what time did we ever profit by obstinately persevering in war? We accepted at Ryswick the terms we had refused five years before, and the same peace which was concluded at Utrecht might have been obtained at Gertruydenberg. And as to security from the future machinations or ambition of the French, I ask you, what security you ever had, or could have? Did the different treaties made with Louis 14th serve to tie up his hands, to restrain his ambition, or to stifle his restless spirit? At what period could you safely repose in the honour, forbearance, and moderation of the French government? Was there ever an idea of refusing to treat, because the peace might be afterwards insecure? The peace of 1763 was not accompanied with securities; and it was no sooner made, than the French court began, as usual, its intrigues. And what security did the right hon. gentleman exact at the peace of 1783, in which he was engaged? Were we rendered secure by that peace? The right hon. gentleman knows well, that soon after that peace, the French formed a plan, in conjunction with the Dutch, of attacking our India possessions, of raising up the native powers against us, and of driving us out of India; as the French are desirous of doing now—only with this difference, that the cabinet of France entered into this project in a moment of profound peace, and when they conceived us to be lulled into perfect security. After making the peace of 1783, the right hon. gentleman and his friends went out, and I, among others, came into office. Suppose, Sir, that we had taken

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up the jealousy upon which the right hon. gentleman now acts, and had refused to ratify the peace which he had made. Suppose that we had said—No; France is acting a perfidious part—we see no security for England in this treaty—they want only a respite, in order to attack us again in an important part of our dominions; and we ought not to confirm the treaty. I ask, would the right hon. gentleman have supported us in this refusal? I say, that upon his present reasoning he ought; but I put it fairly to him, would he have supported us in refusing to ratify the treaty upon such a pretence? He certainly ought not, and I am sure he would not; but the course of reasoning which he now assumes would have justified his taking such a ground. On the contrary, I am persuaded that he would have said—"This is a refinement upon jealousy. Security! You have security, the only security that you can ever expect to get. It is the present interest of France to make peace. She will keep it if it be her interest: she will break it, if it be her interest; such is the state of nations; and you have nothing but your own vigilance for your security."

"It is not the interest of Buonaparté," it seems, "sincerely to enter into a negotiation, or, if he should even make peace, sincerely to keep it." But how are we to decide upon his sincerity? By refusing to treat with him? Surely, if we mean to discover his sincerity, we ought to hear the propositions which he desires to make. "But peace would be unfriendly to his system of military despotism." Sir, I hear a great deal about the short-lived nature of military despotism. I wish the history of the world would bear gentlemen out in this description of military despotism. Was not the government erected by Augustus Cæsar a military despotism; and yet it endured for 6 or 700 years. Military despotism, unfortunately, is too likely in its nature to be permanent, and it is not true that it depends on the life of the first usurper. Though half the Roman emperors were murdered, yet the military despotism went on; and so it would be, I fear, in France. If Buonaparté should disappear from the scene, to make room, perhaps, for a Berthier, or any other general, what difference would that make in the quality of French despotism, or in our relation to the country? We may as safely treat with a Buonaparté, or with any of his successors, be they who they may, as we could with a Louis 16th, a Louis 17th, or a Louis 18th. There is no difference but in the name. Where the power essentially resides, thither we ought to go for peace.

But, Sir, if we are to reason on the fact, I should think that it is the interest of Buonaparté to make peace. A lover of military glory, as that general must necessarily be, may he not think that his measure of glory is full—that it may be tarnished by a reverse of fortune, and can hardly be increased by any new laurels? He must feel, that in the situation to which he is now raised, he can no longer depend on his own fortune, his own genius, and his own talents, for a continuance of his success; he must be under the necessity of employing other generals, whose misconduct or incapacity might endanger his power, or whose triumphs even might affect the interest which he holds in the opinion of the French. Peace, then, would secure to him what he has achieved, and fix the inconstancy of fortune. But this will not be his only motive. He must see that France also requires a respite—a breathing interval, to recruit her wasted strength. To procure her this respite, would be, perhaps, the attainment of more solid glory, as well as the means of acquiring more solid power, than any thing which he can hope to gain from arms, and from the proudest triumphs. May he not then be zealous to gain this fame, the only species of fame, perhaps, that is worth acquiring? Nay, granting that his soul may still burn with the thirst of military exploits, is it not likely that he is earnestly disposed to yield to the feelings of the French people, and to consolidate his power by consulting their interests? I have a right to argue in this way, when suppositions of his insincerity are reasoned upon on the other side. Sir, these aspersions are, in truth, always idle, and even mischievous. I have been too long accustomed to hear imputations and calumnies thrown out upon great and honourable characters to be much influenced by them. My learned friend has paid this night a most just, deserved, and honourable tribute of applause, to the memory of that great and unparalleled character, who has been so recently lost to the world. I must, like him, beg leave to dwell a moment on the venerable George Washington, though I know that it is impossible for me to bestow any thing like adequate praise on a character which gave

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us, more than any other human being, the example of a perfect man; yet, good, great, and unexampled as general Washington was, I can remember the time when he was not better spoken of in this House than Buonaparté is now. The right hon. gentleman who opened this debate (Mr. Dundas) may remember in what terms of disdain, of virulence, and even of contempt, general Washington was spoken of by gentlemen on that side of the House. Does he not recollect with what marks of indignation any member was stigmatized as an enemy to his country, who mentioned with common respect the name of general Washington? If a negotiation had then been proposed to be opened with that great man, what would have been said?—"Would you treat with a rebel, a traitor! What an example would you not give by such an act!" I do not know whether the right hon. gentleman may not yet possess some of his old prejudices on the subject. I hope not. I hope by this time we are all convinced that a republican government, like that of America, may exist without danger or injury to social order, or to established monarchies. They have happily shown that they can maintain the relations of peace and amity with other states: they have shown, too, that they are alive to the feelings of honour; but they do not lose sight of plain good sense and discretion. They have not refused to negotiate with the French, and they have accordingly the hopes of a speedy termination of every difference. We cry up their conduct, but we do not imitate it. At the beginning of the struggle, we were told, that the French were setting up a set of wild and impracticable theories, and that we ought not to be misled by them—we could not grapple with theories. Now we are told that we must not treat, because, out of the lottery, Buonaparté has drawn such a prize as military despotism. Is military despotism a theory? One would think that that is one of the practical things which ministers might understand, and to which they would have no particular objection. But what is our present conduct founded on but a theory, and that a most wild and ridiculous theory? What are we fighting for? Not for a principle; not for security; not for conquest even; but merely for an experiment and a speculation, to discover whether a gentleman at Paris may not turn out a better man than we now take him to be.

My hon. friend (Mr. Whitbread) has been censured for an opinion which he gave, and I think justly, that the change of property in France since the revolution must form an almost insurmountable barrier to the return of the ancient proprietors. "No such thing," says the right hon. gentleman; "nothing can be more easy. Property is depreciated to such a degree, that the purchasers would easily be brought to restore the estates." I very much differ with him in this idea. It is the character of every such convulsion as that which has ravaged France, that an infinite and indescribable load of misery is inflicted upon private families. The heart sickens at the recital of the sorrows which it engenders. No revolution implied, though it may have occasioned, a total change of property. The restoration of the Bourbons does imply it; and there is the difference. There is no doubt but that if the noble families had foreseen the duration and the extent of the evils which were to fall upon their heads, they would have taken a very different line of conduct. But they unfortunately flew from their country. The king and his advisers sought foreign aid. A confederacy was formed to restore them by military force; and as a means of resisting this combination, the estates of the fugitives were confiscated and sold. However, compassion may deplore the case, it cannot be said that the thing is unprecedented. The people have always resorted to such means of defence. Now the question is, how this property is to be got out of their hands? If it be true, as I have heard, that the purchasers of national and forfeited estates amount to 1,500,000 persons, I see no hopes of their being forced to deliver up their property; nor do I even know that they ought. I question the policy, even if the thing were practicable; but I assert, that such a body of new proprietors forms an insurmountable barrier to the restoration of the ancient order of things. Never was a revolution consolidated by a pledge so strong.

But, as if this were not of itself sufficient, Louis 18th from his retirement at Mittau puts forth a manifesto, in which he assures the friends of his house, that he is about to come back with all the powers that formerly belonged to his family. He does not promise to the people a constitution which may tend to conciliate; but, stating that he is to come with all the *ancien régime*, they would natu-

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rally attach to it its proper appendages of bastiles, lettres de cachet, gabelle, &c. And the noblesse, for whom this proclamation was peculiarly conceived, would also naturally feel, that if the monarch was to be restored to all his privileges, they surely were to be reinstated in their estates without a compensation to the purchasers. Is this likely to make the people wish for a restoration of royalty? I have no doubt but there may be a number of Chouans in France, though I am persuaded that little dependence is to be placed on their efforts. There may be a number of people dispersed over France, and particularly in certain provinces, who may retain a degree of attachment to royalty: and how the government will contrive to compromise with that spirit, I know not. I suspect, however, that Buonaparté will try: his efforts have been turned to that object; and, if we may believe report, he has succeeded to a considerable degree. He will naturally call to his recollection the precedent which the history of France itself will furnish. The once formidable insurrection of the Hugonots was completely stifled, and the party conciliated, by the policy of Henry 4th, who gave them such privileges and raised them so high in the government, as to make some persons apprehend danger therefrom to the unity of the empire. Nor will the French be likely to forget the revocation of the edict—one of the memorable acts of the house of Bourbon—an act which was never surpassed in atrocity, injustice, and impolicy, by any thing that has disgraced Jacobinism. If Buonaparté shall attempt some similar arrangement to that of Henry 4th with the Chouans, who will say that he is likely to fail? He will meet with no great obstacle to success from the influence which our ministers have established with the chiefs, or in the attachment and dependence which they have on our protection; for what has the right hon. gentleman told him, in stating the contingencies in which he will treat with Buonaparté? He will excite a rebellion in France—he will give support to the Chouans, if they can stand their ground; but he will not make common cause with them: for unless they can depose Buonaparté, send him into banishment, or execute him, he will abandon the Chouans, and treat with this very man, whom he describes as holding the reins and wielding the powers of France for purposes of unexampled barbarity.

Sir, I wish the atrocities of which we hear so much, and which I abhor as much as any man, were, indeed, unexampled. I fear that they do not belong exclusively to the French. When the right hon. gentleman speaks of the extraordinary successes of the last campaign, he does not mention the horrors by which some of those successes were accompanied. Naples, for instance, has been, among others, what is called "delivered;" and yet, if I am rightly informed, it has been stained and polluted by murders so ferocious, and by cruelties of every kind so abhorrent, that the heart shudders at the recital. It has been said, not only that the miserable victims of the rage and brutality of the fanatics were savagely murdered, but that, in many instances, their flesh was eaten and devoured by the cannibals, who are the advocates and the instruments of social order! Nay, England is not totally exempt from reproach, if the rumours which are circulated be true. I will mention a fact, to give ministers the opportunity, if it be false, of wiping away the stain that it must otherwise fix on the British name. It is said, that a party of the republican inhabitants of Naples took shelter in the fortress of the Castel de Uova. They were besieged by a detachment from the royal army, to whom they refused to surrender; but demanded that a British officer should be brought forward, and to him they capitulated. They made terms with him under the sanction of the British name. It was agreed, that their persons and property should be safe, and that they should be conveyed to Toulon. They were accordingly put on board a vessel; but before they sailed, their property was confiscated, numbers of them taken out, thrown into dungeons, and some of them I understand, notwithstanding the British guarantee actually executed.

Where then, Sir, is this war, which on every side is pregnant with such horrors, to be carried? Where is it to stop? Not till you establish the house of Bourbon! And this you cherish the hope of doing, because you have had a successful campaign. Why, Sir, before this you have had a successful campaign. The situation of the allies, with all they have gained, is surely not to be compared now to what it was when you had taken Valenciennes, Quesnoy, Condé, &c. which induced some gentlemen in this House to prepare themselves

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for a march to Paris. With all that you have gained, you surely will not say that the prospect is brighter now than it was then. What have you gained but the recovery of a part of what you before lost? One campaign is successful to you—another to them; and in this way, animated by the vindictive passions of revenge, hatred, and rancour, which are infinitely more flagitious, even, than those of ambition and the thirst of power, you may go on for ever; as, with such black incentives, I see no end to human misery. And all this without an intelligible motive, all this because you may gain a better peace a year or two hence! So that we are called upon to go on merely as a speculation—We must keep Buonaparté for some time longer at war, as a state of probation. Gracious God, Sir, is war a state of probation? Is peace a rash system? Is it dangerous for nations to live in amity with each other? Is your vigilance, your policy, your common powers of observation, to be extinguished by putting an end to the horrors of war? Cannot this state of probation be as well undergone without adding to the catalogue of human sufferings? "But we must pause!" What! must the bowels of Great Britain be torn out—her best blood be spilt—her treasure wasted—that you may make an experiment? Put yourselves—oh! that you would put yourselves—in the field of battle, and learn to judge of the sort of horrors that you excite. In former wars a man might at least, have some feeling, some interest, that served to balance in his mind the impressions which a scene of carnage and of death must inflict. If a man had been present at the battle of Blenheim, for instance, and had inquired the motive of the battle, there was not a soldier engaged who could not have satisfied his curiosity, and even, perhaps, allayed his feelings—they were fighting to repress the uncontrolled ambition of the grand monarque. But, if a man were present now at a field of slaughter, and were to inquire for what they were fighting—"Fighting!" would be the answer; "they are not fighting, they are pausing." "Why is that man expiring? Why is that other writhing with agony? What means this implacable fury?" The answer must be, "You are quite wrong, Sir, you deceive yourself—They are not fighting—Do not disturb them—they are merely pausing!—this man is not expiring with agony—that man is not dead—he is only pausing! Lord help you, Sir! they are not angry with one another; they have now no cause of quarrel—but their country thinks that there should be a pause. All that you see, Sir, is nothing like fighting—there is no harm, nor cruelty, nor bloodshed in it whatever—it is nothing more than *a political pause!*—it is merely to try an experiment—to see whether Buonaparté will not behave himself better than heretofore; and in the mean time we have agreed to a pause, in pure friendship!" And is this the way, Sir, that you are to show yourselves the advocates of order? You take up a system calculated to uncivilize the world, to destroy order, to trample on religion, to stifle in the heart, not merely the generosity of noble sentiment, but the affections of social nature; and in the prosecution of this system, you spread terror and devastation all around you.

Sir, I have done. I have told you my opinion. I think you ought to have given a civil, clear, and explicit answer to the overture which was fairly and handsomely made you. If you were desirous that the negotiation should have included all your allies, as the means of bringing about a general peace, you should have told Buonaparté so; but I believe you were afraid of his agreeing to the proposal. You took that method before. "Aye, but," you say, "the people were anxious for peace in 1797." I say they are friends to peace now; and I am confident that you will one day own it. Believe me, they are friends to peace; although, by the laws which you have made, restraining the expression of the sense of the people, public opinion cannot now be heard as loudly and unequivocally as heretofore. But I will not go into the internal state of this country. It is too afflicting to the heart to see the strides which have been made, by means of, and under the miserable pretext of this war, against liberty of every kind, both of speech and of writing; and to observe in another kingdom the rapid approaches to that military despotism which we affect to make an argument against peace. I know, Sir, that public opinion, if it could be collected, would be for peace, as much now as in 1797, and I know that it is only by public opinion—not by a sense of their duty—not by the inclination of their minds—that ministers will be brought, if ever, to give us peace. I conclude, Sir, with repeating what

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I said before; I ask for no gentleman's vote who would have reprobated the compliance of ministers with the proposition of the French government; I ask for no gentleman's support to-night who would have voted against ministers, if they had come down and proposed to enter into a negotiation with the French; but I have a right to ask—I know, that in honour, in consistency, in conscience, I have a right to expect, the vote of every gentleman who would have voted with ministers in an address to his majesty, diametrically opposite to the motion of this night.

The House divided:

Tellers.

YEAS	The Lord Hawkesbury - Mr. Canning - - - -	265
NOES	Mr. Whitbread - - - Mr. Sheridan - - - -	64

So it was resolved in the affirmative.

List of the Minority.

Adair, R.	Kemp, J.
Anson, J.	Leicester, sir J.
Astley, J.	Lemon, sir W.
Aubrey, sir J.	Lemon, colonel
Barclay, G.	Lloyd, J. M.
Biddulph, R.	Martin, James
Birch, J. R.	Milner, sir W.
Bird, W. W.	Nicholls, John
Bouverie, hon. E.	North, D.
Bouverie, hon. W. H.	Northey, W.
Broglen, J.	Plomer, W.
Burdett, sir F.	Pulteney, sir W.
Byng, G.	Richardson, J.
Cavendish, lord G.	Robson, R. B.
Colhoun, W.	Russell, lord John
Coombe, H. C.	Russell, lord William
Copley, sir L.	St. John, hon. St. A.
Courtenay, J.	Shakespeare, A.
Denison, W. J.	Shum, G.
Edwards, B.	Smith, W.
Erskine, hon. T.	Stanley, lord
Fletcher, sir H.	Sturt, C.
Fox, hon. C. J.	Taylor, M. A.
Green, J.	Tierney, George
Grey, C.	Townshend, lord J.
Hare, J.	Tufton, hon. H.
Harrison, J.	Vyner, R.
Heathcote, J.	Walwyn, J.
Hill, sir R.	Winnington, sir E.
Howard, H.	Western, C. C.
Jeffreys, N.	Wigley, E.
Jekyll, J.	TELLERS.
Jolliffe, W.	Sheridan, R. B.
Knight, R. P.	Whitbread, S.

Debate in the Commons on the Failure of the Expedition to Holland.] Feb. 10. Mr. *Sheridan* rose and said:—As to the inquiry which I shall have the honour to propose, few arguments will, I think, be necessary to prove that it ought to be adopted. I profess, Sir, that in bringing this subject before the House, I do not consider it as a party question. It is one that can admit of no party feeling. It is a question that in the highest degree interests every feeling for the glory of the country, every sentiment of humanity for the loss our troops have sustained, for the honour which they have to support. We are called upon by the sacred duty we owe to our constituents, to investigate a transaction, which on the face of it, presents so much argument for inquiry; and which, in its consequences, has been attended with such a waste of blood, and expense of treasure. In treating of this question, I shall not proceed upon private information, but upon the recorded accounts of ministers themselves in their own gazettes. I shall not consider the advantages of having obtained possession of the Dutch fleet. That acquisition I view, perhaps, as less important than others do. I cannot suppose, that it will be contended that there has been no failure. I cannot conceive, that the corrupt and clandestine surrender of the Dutch fleet will be viewed as the attainment of all our wishes. Yet I see, that the lord lieutenant tells the Irish parliament, that the expedition to Holland will prevent the invasion of Ireland. He speaks as if the main object of our policy was not the deliverance of the Dutch from the yoke of France; not the restoration of the house of Orange to their rights; not the protection of religion, or the defence of social order; but the capture of a few Dutch ships of war!—as if for such an acquisition we have subsidized the mercenary magnanimity of Russia, for this called into action our military strength, and strained our financial resources. What other advantage than this have we obtained from this famed secret expedition? Secret, indeed, it was called, till the term became absolutely ridiculous. Never was an undertaking conducted with such ostentatious mystery—never did the object of a secret expedition obtain such universal notoriety. The only thing secret in the expedition was the favourable disposition of the Dutch people to our cause; a secret so well kept, that to this hour it has never been discovered.

But the gentlemen opposite are of opinion that the Dutch fleet is not the only thing we have gained. It may be so, to be sure, in a certain way. It was an ex-

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pedition of discovery, and not altogether unsuccessful in that view. We have, in the first place, discovered, that there is no reliance to be placed in the chancellor of the exchequer's knowledge of human nature;—2ndly, that Holland is a country intersected by dykes, ditches, and canals; and 3rdly, that the weather there is not so good in October as it is in June! Information, however, may be purchased too dear. If we consider the number of lives which have been lost; and reflect, that the tenth of every man's income has been squandered, and all by the misconduct of ministers, we shall have little reason to boast of our discoveries. We took possession of the Dutch ships in the name of the stadtholder. Are they to be manned with the mutinous crews who surrendered them, and employed in the name of the stadtholder? If so, they are no addition to our navy. When I reflect upon the mode in which this acquisition was gained, I consider it as of the most perilous example. I tremble to see a deliberating navy in the face of the naval force of England; a navy deciding upon the cause of their country, instead of fighting its battles. I do not like to see mutiny recommended to our sailors by any example or any approbation. I hope there is nothing in the temper of our navy to catch the infection. I wish to see the spirit of Blake prevail, who told his sailors, that it was their duty to fight for their country, in whatever hands the government might be. If ministers promoted a spirit of mutiny amongst the Dutch sailors they ill understood the interests of their own country. They departed from a great principle to serve a particular purpose. To gain a partial advantage, they introduced a most dangerous precedent. Suppose admiral Story had resisted the spirit of mutiny and disobedience; suppose he had done what De Ruyter would have done in his situation—endeavoured to maintain his authority and perished in the attempt—would you have permitted your seamen to welcome the Dutch sailors besmeared with the blood of their admiral and officers? Would you have sanctioned such a deed? Would you have applauded the doers? Would you have allowed your seamen to become their allies and associates? Yet was it only the want of vigour in the officers that prevented this catastrophe; the example is the same; and we all know how dangerous such a violation is to the principle of discipline.—Entertaining these sentiments, I can as little approve the mode in which the Dutch fleet was gained, as I can enter into the views of those who represent the acquisition as of so much importance. Take into consideration the whole of the case; weigh what you have lost and what you have gained, and you will find that there is a fearful balance against you. The result of the late expedition has thrown discredit on your councils, and dishonour on your operations. You cannot again attempt to restore the house of Orange; you have left the pretensions of that family more desperate than ever. The confidence of their enemies is confirmed; the hopes of their partizans are overthrown. After this review, I confess I cannot conceive how any man can contend, that the result of the expedition has in any degree repaid our sacrifices, or realized our expectations.

As to the object of the expedition, in so far as it aimed at the rescue of Holland from the dominion of France, and the restoration of the house of Orange, I most readily agree, that it was a legitimate British object. In proportion, however, as the object was wise and good, must be the criminality of those to whose misconduct its failure is to be attributed. If, by their gross negligence, their ignorance, and their presumption, we have failed in an undertaking so dear to every British heart, the value of the prize for which we contended only augments the mortification of our disappointment. That the house of Orange has strong claims upon the gratitude, nay, upon the justice of Great Britain, I do not deny. They well deserved that hospitable asylum which they enjoy in this country. Their expulsion from their hereditary authority in Holland, is in a great measure to be ascribed to their deference to British councils, perhaps their devotion to the views of British ministers. The restoration of that family was, therefore, in itself an honourable motive for our interference. At the same time I cannot agree in the opinion, that we had any particular claim to the attachment of the Dutch. It is long since any cordiality prevailed between the two countries. The French faction had been increasing, and possessed a very powerful interest in the United Provinces. In this situation, grounds of dispute have arisen at no very remote period. In the American war, the Dutch complained bitterly of our aggressions,

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In answer to their complaints, we represented them in speeches and proclamations as a dull and stupid people. A noble lord, then in administration, used the extraordinary expression, that the Dutch must be "stunned into their senses." By such treatment the influence of France was increased in Holland. Perhaps too, the Dutch, in the mere view of promoting their own interests, might conceive a connexion with France more beneficial to them than one with England. At the breaking out of the present war, the Dutch, against their own wishes, were compelled to abandon their neutrality, and to take a share in the war. They were engaged in the contest by our influence, but we were not able to protect them in the moment of difficulty. From being our allies they became our enemies. But, previous to this change, what were the symptoms of cordiality and good understanding when we were endeavouring to defend Holland? Did not our troops leave that country complaining of the people, and irritated by their reproaches? After the success of the French invasion, was our conduct calculated to increase the number of our friends? Was it right, after the stadtholder had taken refuge in this country to consider him sovereign of Holland (which he never was), and to require his consent to the seizure of so much Dutch property? Were such measures conciliatory? Did they tend to promote the interest of the stadtholder? In the negotiation at Lisle, what was the conduct of ministers? The negotiation was broken off, because the French refused to allow us to retain the conquests we had made at the expense of the Dutch who had been involved in the quarrel by our obstinacy and violence. Must not the Dutch have considered us as gross hypocrites, when we lately affected such a zeal for their interests, which, in the instances alluded to, we had rendered completely subservient to our own? These are circumstances which could not fail to produce a powerful impression upon the cool and calculating Dutchman. But on entering upon the expedition for the deliverance of Holland, what means did we employ to efface the prejudice that must have existed against our disinterestedness? Look at the proclamations which were issued on our landing in Holland. Read that distributed by sir Ralph Abercromby: it holds out to the Dutch, to be sure, delightful visions of future happiness under their ancient government; but it says not a word of the Cape of Good Hope, of Ceylon, of Trincomalée. We address the Dutch, a people cold, considerate, phlegmatic, as if they were a nation of religious fanatics or chivalrous warriors. Religion is dragged in upon all occasions; but why it is so I cannot understand. The French did not interfere with the religion of the Dutch. They do not seem, indeed, to have prevented religious worship in any country where their arms have prevailed; but least of all, had they any temptation to interfere with the poverty and simplicity of the religious institutions of the Dutch. What influence, then, could such topics produce in Holland? Every thing that could have no effect was urged—every thing that might engage them in our favour was omitted. We tell the Dutch to "forget and forgive the past." But, how will they understand this advice? Will they not consider it as a recommendation to forget that they ever had colonies, and to forgive us for taking them? The minister seems to have understood very little of Dutch human nature, if he expected such proclamations could have any success among them. If, instead of all the fine reflections upon religion, social order, and their former government, he had said, We will give you back all your colonies, the argument would have been understood, and the effect might have been favourable. Instead of this, what did we tell them, in other terms?—Be a nation without trade; take back your old government; be a province dependent upon England through the stadtholder. These are the blessings which we promise you, and which you must co-operate with us to obtain.

These considerations I have adduced, to show that ministers had not truly calculated the temper and views of the people of Holland; that they had no reason to flatter themselves with the support of that country; and that they did not pursue the course by which it was to be obtained. It was, to the last degree, arrogant and presumptuous to involve this nation in the expense of such an armament as was employed in the late expedition, upon vain speculations. The right hon. gentleman should not have put his theories of human nature to such a costly experiment. He ought to have acted, in matters of such high moment, upon authentic information and upon practical grounds.

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There is another very material point which I cannot pass unnoticed. If the plan proposed had been attended with success, was it the intention of ministers to establish the old government of Holland? I confess I have doubts on this subject. A noble and vigorous statesman in another place, in arguing upon the Irish union, represented the old government of Holland as feeble, inefficient, incompetent to its own defence and to any useful exertion, from the want of unity in its executive authority. Was it, then, for the re-establishment of this piece of imbecility, that our blood and treasure were to be applied? or was it intended to strengthen the government, to give it the vigour of despotism for the purposes of self-defence and useful alliance? If this was their intention, they meant an usurpation; and I trust that the stadtholder would have been an unwilling usurper. Can we conceive that ministers concealed this design, if it was really entertained; if they did not communicate the intention to the partisans of the house of Orange, they were guilty of a shameful fraud in inviting them to contribute to the restoration of the ancient government, while they were, in fact, to risk their lives and fortunes for a new constitution. If they did communicate their design to improve the former government by an infusion of additional strength, were they sure that the Dutch would agree to changes which violated those principles and those forms to which they were obstinately attached? After the differences, then, which subsisted between this country and Holland during the American war; after the experience of the campaigns on the continent in which we were engaged along with them against France; after the known views of domestic parties in Holland; after we had forced Holland into the war, and showed, after all, a desire to indemnify ourselves for the continental conquests, by the possession of her colonies; had we any reason to infer a welcome reception? Ministers had no right to calculate upon the dispositions of the Dutch. They are guilty, therefore, of having squandered the blood and resources of this country upon a plan, undertaken without a proper attention to the circumstances on which its success necessarily depended. Considering the scheme of this expedition, from its first conception to the period of its execution, we find in it such variation and uncertainty as preclude the supposition that it was embraced and pursued upon any uniform views of policy. The powers of the hereditary prince of Orange, given in his proclamation to the Dutch, are dated in December 1798, from which a presumption arises that the expedition was in agitation at the time of the first treaty with Russia. The declaration of the emperor Paul points at this attempt for the deliverance of Holland. If it was then planned and agreed that Russian troops should be employed, what was the policy of ministers? Though they had themselves admitted that the scheme must be a coup-de-main, the landing in Holland was not effected till the 27th of August 1799. It appears that expectations had been formed of inducing Prussia to enter into the common cause against France. In June 1799, however, all hopes of drawing Prussia from her neutrality were abandoned. A treaty is concluded, in which 17,000 Russians are to be employed in the expedition against Holland. The emperor Paul, too, agrees to employ some of his own ships to transport the forces to England, upon condition of his being allowed ample indemnification for fitting out the vessels in question for another expedition. The landing at Helder was at length effected. No blame whatever attaches to the royal commander in chief, or to those who served along with him. The expedition was planned upon such sanguine calculations of co-operation from the inhabitants, that the military efforts were made dependent upon the political views of its authors. The army was sent to Holland as to a friendly country. A summons was sent by general Abercromby to the Batavian commander, in a style of haughty menace, which clearly proved that it was not the production of that gallant officer. The answer of the Batavian officer was spirited. Did sir Ralph find the Batavian troops disposed, like the sailors, to surrender without a blow? Did he not meet with the most vigorous resistance, even before any Frenchmen appeared in action? Our very first success was purchased by the loss of a great number of our brave countrymen. Why, after the landing was effected, was no attempt made to follow up the first advantage? Was our general prevented by his orders, or by the want of necessaries? The fact was, that the army was destitute of the means of moving forward. The army was left without baggage-waggons? they were first cheated with the

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hope that certain ships in sight contained these waggons; but afterwards were told the waggons were in some ships, and the wheels in others. The want of means of conveying the bleeding troops from the field of battle obliged them to have recourse to Dutch schuyts. Was it true, that such ignorance prevailed of the roads of Holland, that the waggons which were afterwards employed proved useless? No consideration ought to shield from inquiry the persons to whom these, and similar inconveniences were owing.

Between the first landing at the Helder, and the arrival of the reinforcements under the duke of York, an opportunity had been given to ascertain the determination of the Batavian army to resist our attempt. French troops were pouring into Holland. Was it not known that the nature of the country afforded means of defence almost insuperable? Were not all the circumstances which pointed out the certain conclusion, that the expedition could not be successful, known previous to the sailing of the duke of York? If there was not a secret motive for persevering in the expedition, which no common understanding can suspect, why did not ministers profit by their experience to avoid farther disaster? If they did not know all these circumstances, they must stand convicted of a negligence no less criminal than the presumption of persisting after so many warnings to desist. On the 10th of September, the French and Batavians, anxious to make an impression on our troops before the arrival of the reinforcements, attacked sir Ralph, but were repulsed by the gallantry of our troops, and the strength of their position. On the 13th, the duke of York arrived, and on the 19th, an attack was made upon the enemy, which was successful in that part where the British troops were engaged, and unsuccessful on the part of the Russians. Of the behaviour of the latter I shall say but little. If the accounts of their conduct in the villages where they came be true, it would form the ground of an address to his majesty. The result of this action was, that the British and Russian forces retreated to their former position.—What was at this time passing at home? On the 24th, ministers had intelligence of this disastrous engagement; yet, with all the facts in their possession, they made his majesty come down to parliament, and express his sanguine hopes of the ultimate success of the expedition! A more flagrant deception of parliament never was practised.—After the action of the 2nd October, the army moved forward. This was represented as a great victory; there is every reason to believe, however, that it was a drawn battle. Alkmaer was stated to have opened its gates, as if this had been the act of the inhabitants, and a proof of their friendly disposition. The fact, however, was, that a lieutenant and some troops having accidentally advanced near the place, found it without means of defence, of which he immediately gave information, and the town was occupied by our men. In his dispatches after the action, his royal highness states that it had given him the command of an extent of country, and that the inhabitants would have an opportunity of declaring themselves. What was the consequence? The army attempted to advance; an engagement took place on the 6th, in which we claimed the victory: but so little advantageous was the success, that on the evening of the 7th, the retreat was ordered; the army returned to its old position at Shagen Brug; and this retreat was conducted so precipitately, that 400 women and children were left behind. These the French treated with great propriety; nay, these cruel and perfidious enemies actually clothed the children, and sent them back with the women to the British head-quarters. Thus, instead of the deliverance of the Dutch, the army was compelled to enter into a capitulation for its escape! What a mortifying termination of a plan in which so much exertion had been employed, and so much of our hope had been embarked! I do not censure those by whom it was concluded: I believe, on the contrary, that it was inevitable in the situation in which the army was placed. Yet how painful a reflection! to find that the inducement held out to the enemy to agree to the convention, was a threat to destroy for ever the means of commerce of that very people whom we had gone to save! I am sure that had circumstances made it necessary to proceed to so cruel an alternative, it would have been employed with reluctance. It was a humiliating thing, after such proud expectations, to fail in our design, and to fail too amidst such an accumulation of disgrace. Our army left Holland with sentiments of indignation against the Batavians, by whom they conceived themselves injured and deceived;

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with detestation of their allies, to whose misconduct they imputed the disastrous termination of the campaign; and with increased esteem for the enemy whom they had been taught to abhor.

Such is the transaction which the House is called upon to investigate. Never was there a case which *prima facie* presented stronger grounds for inquiry. There are moments when it becomes this House to exercise a peculiar jealousy of its reputation. An opinion has gone abroad, that this House has reposed too blind a confidence in ministers. The rewards which have followed this confidence have thrown more than a suspicion on the purity of the motive. It is necessary, on an occasion like this, to watch their conduct with more than ordinary attention. The suspicion that the minister has nothing to fear from the controlling vigilance of parliament, must either be strongly confirmed, or honourably removed. It is not a consequence which any member need fear from the result of inquiry, that ministers will be obliged to quit their places. It would be no advantage, doubtless, to show that the administration of this country is in the hands of convicted incapacity; but still it would be a far greater evil to prove that ministers are too powerful for control; that error is exempted from inquiry, and misconduct secure from censure. The present case should afford a salutary caution to the House how they gave their confidence to ministers to pursue against France that system of exploded impolicy which has produced such fatal mischief and indelible disgrace. We are at war for the restoration of Bourbons, and for nothing else. All the qualifications with which this proposition is limited are mere quibbles. This is the *sine quâ non* to immediate peace. But if no enlarged view of policy, no dictate of constitutional jealousy, can move a British House of Commons to institute the proposed inquiry, they owe it to the reputation of the army, whose honour has been cruelly attacked abroad, to investigate the transaction to the bottom, and lay the blame where it ought to fall. Read the report which has been published in the Petersburgh Gazette* of the different actions in Holland, and say whether you are not called upon to vindicate the character of the British army? You owe it to the character of the British nation, to the spirit of your troops—you owe it to the honour of the living, to the memory of the dead—to go into an inquiry. I move "That it be referred to a committee of the whole House to consider of

* Petersburgh, Oct. 22. (From the Court Gazette).—Major-general Hessen, from his head quarters at Zypser Schleusen:—"I humbly acquaint your imperial majesty, that, on the 4th of September, I arrived from Yarmouth with the first division of troops before the Texel. We disembarked immediately in row-boats, and landed all our troops on the 6th at the Helder, though in a violent gale of wind. General Hermann was arrived before me, and was at the distance of 35 werstes from the Helder, towards Alkmaer. By his orders I joined him on the 7th; and on the 8th in the morning, at four o'clock, we proceeded in three columns, and attacked the enemy with a bravery only characteristic to your majesty's subjects. We drove him from three strong entrenchments, took all the batteries with the bayonet, and entered three strong villages, with the town of Bergen. We had already taken fourteen pieces of cannon, about 1,000 prisoners, and killed upwards of 2,000 of the enemy. However, all our ammunition being exhausted, we could no longer carry on offensive operations against a numerous enemy, who employed all his forces against us, who forced the right wing of our allies, who intended to attack at the same time, but who, from causes unknown to me, were two hours too late, which considerably injured the victory which we had already gained. Lieut.-general Hermann was made prisoner. I cannot conceal from you, most gracious sovereign, that the troops of your majesty are in want of the most necessary articles. I will not, however, pretend to say that this is owing to the want of care of our allies, but rather to their late arrangements, when, contrary to the first plan, they landed all the troops, their own as well as ours, in a crowd, so that it was impossible the small track of ground which we occupied could furnish us with provisions, and we are under the necessity to wait for supplies from England. We were in want of sufficient artillery and horses, and the troops were not yet recovered from a violent sea sickness. Our ammunition being exhausted, we had no means of attack and defence but the bayonet; but through the extreme fatigue of our troops, their retreat began in confusion. The commander in chief being a prisoner, lieutenant-general Scherebzow killed, and major-general Suthof wounded, the chief command devolved on me. I strove to collect our troops, and retired to our first advantageous position in such a manner that the enemy found it impossible to follow. Our whole loss in killed, wounded, and prisoners, amounts to about 3,000 men; but the enemy has lost many more; the prisoners taken by the English and ourselves amounting to above 3,000 men," &c.

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the Causes of the Failure of the late Expedition to Holland."

Mr. Secretary *Dundas* rose, and, after a few introductory observations, said:—Sir; the object of the expedition was threefold: first, to rescue the United Provinces from the tyranny of the French; secondly, to add to the efficient force of this country, and diminish that of the enemy, by getting possession of the Dutch fleet, so as to render it of no use to the French, by whom it was kept with a view of aiding that enemy in a descent on some part of his majesty's dominions; thirdly, to divert the enemy from its projected pursuits in general, by hostile operations in Holland on our part, thereby to defeat the plans of the enemy in the course of the campaign, whether they chose to remain in Holland or not. These objects were in contemplation when the expedition was agreed on; and there was a great probability, at that time, that all the three objects would be successful; two of them did succeed, and only one of them failed, and for which I shall shortly assign a sufficient reason.—With regard to the first general object, namely, that of rescuing the United Provinces from the galling yoke of the French. I should have thought it was hardly necessary to argue, in this House, on the wisdom and policy of such a measure. This, indeed, was admitted by the hon. gentleman himself, who, by the way, accompanied it with a little affectation of candour: for he was pleased to bestow some praise on what he called the wisdom and policy of his majesty's ministers, for rescuing Holland from the tyranny of the French. I thought, that as he set out with this as a matter of praise to his majesty's government, he intended to follow a course different from that which he did follow; but I was a little surprised to find him directly wheel about, and then make an eloquent address, the obvious purpose of which was to tell Holland this story: "Be you aware of the English. They endeavoured to destroy you in the American war. They take your possessions, but they will never restore them to you. If ever they should remove the French yoke from off your necks, be on your guard against them. This is my advice to you as a British senator." But the hon. gentleman ought to have recollected, that all these grievances, of which he so kindly reminds Holland, were committed before the year 1787; and yet, during that year, this country was successful in bringing about a revolution in Holland, which the hon. gentleman recommended highly. Why did the Dutch submit to that Revolution? Why did we interfere to accomplish it? To rescue Holland from the yoke of the house of Bourbon. Was it more criminal in us to attempt to rescue the same provinces from the yoke of the French republic? In the one case, Prussia did that in concert with Great Britain which the hon. gentleman applauds. In the other, Great Britain attempts the same thing alone, which the hon. gentleman condemns. Where am I to look for the hon. gentleman's real sentiments? I say, I wish to rescue Holland from the tyranny of France; whether monarchical France, or republican, is to me no object. I say it is the policy of this country to rescue Holland from the gripe of France; and this is no new policy. To prove this, I will read what has been laid down as the creed of this country with regard to its connexion with Holland; and it is as far back as the year 1585, when a state paper was published. It relates to the relative interests of Holland and this country, and was penned by Cecil, minister to queen Elizabeth: the substance of which is, that Elizabeth thought it the policy of England to give assistance to the Dutch, and to prevent their being overpowered by the Spaniards, king William followed the same policy, and it has been uniformly observed since the reign of the house of Brunswick. There are, indeed, exceptions to this policy, in the reign of king James; but no good politician has ever doubted of the imprudence of that counsel; nor need I say any more to prove that, if there was any prospect of success, the object of rescuing the Dutch from the French yoke, was an object worth pursuit.

The next point I have to notice, is that of our taking possession of the Dutch fleet, in order to diminish the power of France; I did not expect, even from the hon. gentleman any thing like a doubt of the value of such an acquisition. To what has the Dutch fleet been destined for the greater part of this war? To invade our dominions! We have heard it frequently said, that if any hostile fleet appeared on our northern coast in Ireland, it could only come from the Texel. Is it therefore nothing to extinguish all hope of the enemy upon this subject? Besides, we took between 6 and 7,000 seamen of the

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Dutch, all of whom were liable to be employed in the service of the French fleet. We took also 40,000 tons of shipping belonging to the enemy, which might have annoyed our commerce. We have transferred the Dutch fleet from their own to the English coast; so far, therefore, I say, that the expedition has been completely successful.

A third object of the expedition was, that this country should co-operate in the general plan against the enemy. I believe it was a question with France, for a while, whether it was better for her to use much of her strength to prevent us from recovering Holland, or to use all her power to reinforce her armies in different parts of Europe? She at last determined to reinforce her power in Holland. Does the hon. gentleman mean to say, that her withdrawing from the general plan of the campaign 40,000 of her men, was not withdrawing, in the first place, in conjunction with the Dutch fleet, all chance of an attack upon our own coast? Was it not making a great diversion of their force, and so far disappointing their scheme? I say, that this expedition kept them in a state of suspense with regard to the distribution of the force of which we felt the beneficial effects in the course of the campaign, in various parts of Europe. What was the case at the battle of Novi? It was the most bloody, as well as the most doubtful, between the Austrians and the French, in the whole campaign, and it was the cause of the recovery of all Italy from the grasp of the French republic: it decided the fate of Tortona, and Coni. If this be so, I would ask, whether this success could have taken place, on the part of the allies, if the expedition to Holland had not taken place? Nor is this all: the effect was felt at Suabia; after which the Archduke was enabled to proceed with vigour against the French. Or, if you take notice of Massena in Switzerland, you will see the advantage the allies have gained: and this, I say again, is an illustration of the advantages you have gained by this expedition to Holland; for I say they are to be ascribed to the necessity to which the French were driven to employ 40,000 of their men to reinforce their power in Holland. It has given decision to the imperial arms almost all over Europe; at Novi, at Suabia, at Tortona, at Coni, and at Philipsburgh. Two of the objects, therefore, have been completely successful.

The next question is, whether we could have had any chance of rescuing Holland from the tyranny of France, in case the French had followed the plan of the campaign formerly adopted by them in the different parts of Europe? Now, upon that subject, I do say, that the French could not have prevented our recovering Holland, if they had not made such prodigious reinforcements in Holland; and it was a matter of great doubt what policy the French would adopt at the moment our expedition was undertaken: whether they would reinforce the power in Holland, or employ all their means of reinforcement in other parts of the continent, for the purposes of the campaign. They adopted that of reinforcing their power in Holland; the result of which was, that we were not able to rescue the United Provinces from the French yoke: but that was only one part of the result; another part of it was, that the French lost every other point which they contested in the whole campaign all over Europe. Now, as to the good which would arise from the inquiry proposed, I am satisfied, that any inquiry into this matter must be defective for any useful purpose of information, without exposing every thing with regard to Holland. It is impossible for us to vindicate ourselves in the shape of an inquiry, because it is absolutely impossible for us to produce the grounds of intelligence on which the expedition was founded. The publication of the whole of that intelligence would be highly injurious to the interests of Europe; and to disclose the intelligence partially would be worse than doing nothing. The hon. gentleman says, that the people of Holland were not favourable to us in the object of our expedition. If I were at liberty to give up all confidential communication on this matter, I could convince this House that the disposition of the Dutch was not unfavourable to us. They have been pretty well squeezed by the French. A Dutchman's last shilling has been sweated down to a sixpence. Am I then to suppose that the feeling of a Dutchman is different from the feeling of the rest of mankind; or that he has less attachment to his property than any other man?—Now, as to the making known the instructions given to commanders; I am of opinion that no such instructions can, with propriety, come before this House. I will tell the hon. gentleman why. I am not sure it will never be the policy of this

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country again to attempt the recovery of Holland. Another reason is this, that from the very nature of the thing, the instructions must contain much conditional matter. Would it then be wise to expose the plan of our future operations; for that, to a given extent, would be the result of giving up these instructions?

I shall now proceed to show you that this expedition was wisely undertaken. Sir Ralph Abercromby sailed for the Helder on the 13th of August. A more prosperous commencement was never known. On the 14th came on the most extraordinary hurricane that ever blew from the heavens. It was impossible to land a single sailor on any part of the coast of Holland, and this continued, with the exception of one day, until the 27th. What was the effect of all this? It enabled the enemy to know where we must land, and their troops came in shoals to oppose us: 7,000 men were collected to oppose us; so that sir Ralph could not land his men to advantage: the ardour of the men, the zeal and gallantry of the commander, which were never excelled on any occasion were put to the severest trial. Without any thing but their muskets and bayonets, they made their landing good; and by it the Dutch fleet was secured. I state these things chiefly to show how easy it is to censure both soldiers and their generals unjustly, upon an event depending on the temper of the elements. The hon. gentleman says, the troops had no horses to draw their waggons. They had no waggons; and could not possibly land them under such circumstances, if they had intended it. But he will recollect, that instantly on their landing they did not want them; for all they had immediately to do was to secure a landing place, and a port of communication. Till the 1st of September, sir Ralph had to consider what position he should take, when reinforcements were to arrive. There is no complaint against sir Ralph for the disposition of his army; he judged wisely. The delay arose from causes which no human wisdom could foresee. Had he been able to land when he expected, he would not only have struck the brilliant stroke he did; but, in all probability, have commanded complete success to all the objects of the expedition. The same wind which prevented our landing on the coast of Holland, prevented the Russian troops from arriving to reinforce ours. They did not land till the 18th. The duke of York, on the 19th, offered the Russian general d'Hermann to delay the attack, if he thought his troops were not sufficiently recovered from the fatigues of their voyage; but the general earnestly requested the attack might be made, and did it with a promptitude which reflected the highest honour upon him. This ardour led that general to the field full two hours sooner than the time appointed. The army was, however, completely successful till a late hour in the day. General d'Hermann and his troops were in possession of the village of Bergen, and crowned with victory, till his ardour led him beyond a given point, and turned the fate of the day.—When the attack was made, the French army amounted to 7,000 and the Dutch to 12,000 men; yet, notwithstanding this superiority, our troops fought and beat them with a bravery that did them the highest honour. But French reinforcements continually arriving, the duke of York was advised by general Abercromby, and all the other officers, to accede to an armistice. The officers volunteered their advice (but not till after the 2nd of October), to fall back to the first strong position. The duke yielded to this advice; and in so doing, consulted the dictates of reason and humanity. And here, once for all, allow me to advert to those various parts of the hon. gentleman's speech, in which he bestowed encomiums on the character of the commander in chief. Upon those parts of his speech, I need say nothing more, than that every thing he has said, is richly deserved by the object of his praise. I am sure I say so with equal sincerity; and certainly with more means of judging than the hon. gentleman possesses.

Sir, the hon. gentleman has said a great deal of the disgrace which attached to the end of the expedition; but, for my part, I can see nothing disgraceful in it. Where, I ask, is the disgrace? I will venture to say, that no nation was ever more struck with the gallantry of our troops, than the French soldiers themselves who fought against them. Our army returned home with as much honour, as they first entered Holland. I think the duke of York was perfectly right in signing the convention; nor could he be wrong in giving up 8,000 lumber of French troops, from our overloaded prisons. He did not recede from any one article in which national honour was concerned. He resisted with firmness and indignation every proposition for

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delivering back the fleet. The hon. gentleman has attempted to influence the feelings of the House by dwelling on the blood that has been shed, and the immense treasure expended on the occasion. He has stated that expense to be at six or seven millions; a sum equivalent to the Income tax; but there is no occasion to leave this point to conjecture: the expenditure actually amounted to 1,142,000*l.*; and computing by debtor and creditor, there can be no objection to it. I have a right to consider the ships that were taken, and to state the reduction for the maintenance of a fleet in the North Seas, to check a Dutch fleet. If you take the value of the Dutch fleet, the decrease of expense in the maintenance of the North Sea fleet, and the saving in the pay of 10,000 seamen voted less than last year, the balance is greatly in our favour. In the article of prisoners, what have we given up? Why 8,000 French troops; in lieu of which we have gained 6,000 Dutch seamen to man our fleets, which, whether they fought under Orange or English colours, would be found a great addition to the strength of our navy. The objects gained by the expedition were, the ships, the reduction of expense, and the great diversion in the French forces, which facilitated the victories of the combined armies. It has been said that the expedition was attended with the loss of 10,000 lives. To remove this impression, will be to state what the loss really was. I will state, in detail, the returns made during the whole of the campaign:—Sick and wounded admitted into the hospitals 4,088; sent home out of these 2,993; the whole, who died, amounted only to 185; and the whole of the killed to 846. Upon a review, therefore, of the whole affair, I must object to all public military criticism on any part of military operations, and I feel it my duty to resist a motion of inquiry, which could not be productive of any actual benefit; and at the same time, might considerably clog and harass the measures of government.

Mr. *Bouverie* thought that an inquiry should be instituted into the causes of the failure of the expedition. After the constitutional force of the country had been demolished to fit it out, it had failed, under circumstances disgraceful to the British name. Was it not the duty of the House to investigate the business, and ascertain whether blame was to be attached to the projectors of the expedition, or to those to whom the execution of it had been entrusted?

Mr. *Tierney* said, that no part of the right hon. gentleman's most extraordinary speech surprised him so much as that in which he objected to an investigation taking place, because it might offend our allies, the Russians. If, before this enterprise was begun, a measure had been proposed which might lead to jealousies being excited between the two nations, the right honourable gentleman might have opposed it with some show of reason. But these jealousies already exist; each party ascribes the failure of the enterprise to the misconduct of the other. An enquiry into the true state of the affair, is the only way to restore cordiality between them. Our brave army have a right to insist upon an inquiry. The Russian general casts the most foul imputations upon them. An enquiry is the only method by which his aspersions can be wiped off, and the faultless conduct of our countrymen displayed to the world. For this glorious expedition, which has neither been disastrous nor expensive, which has been rather lucrative in a commercial point of view, and which has raised our military character, the right hon. gentleman stated that the grounds were threefold. Its first object was, to gain possession of the Dutch fleet; but this, I believe, was a very subordinate one; secondly, the deliverance of Holland from the yoke of France; and, thirdly, to make a diversion in favour of our allies. A diversion may often be attended with excellent effects, and perhaps this one was of service; but surely there was little merit in saving an Austrian army by the sacrifice of a British one. What are the benefits which resulted to the allies from our landing on the coast of Holland? We are told that it operated at Novi. I wonder it is not said that it was the cause of the capture of Seringapatam. But, Sir, this battle was fought on the 15th of August, and on the 10th of September there was scarcely a French soldier in Holland. General Massena defeated the Austrians when our troops were on the continent; and when the supplies were sent him which had been assisting the Dutch, he was unable to make much greater progress. Thus, out of the three objects proposed by the expedition, one only had been successfully pursued. The fleet we have gained we cannot employ: it surrendered to us only in the hope of

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soon serving under the stadtholder; and the sailors testified the utmost dissatisfaction on being brought to this country in the manner in which they were. The right hon. gentleman does not go quite so far as to say that we delivered Holland, but he contends that ministers had sufficient reason to believe that they would be able to deliver it. We ask what these grounds were which justified the attempt; but the right hon. gentleman shrinks from the inquiry: it would be improper to disclose them; and all that he tells us is, that he is a follower of lord Burleigh, the prime minister of queen Elizabeth. I do not contend that it would not be of advantage to this country that Holland should be rescued from the dominion of France; but I contend that government were not justified in making so arduous an attempt, without being assured of the good will of the natives, and that if they had any such assurances, they did not avail themselves of them as they ought to have done. What objection can there be to lay before us the favourable intelligence they had from Holland, if any such existed. If we were invited to the Helder, we were soon shown that we have nothing to expect from the Dutch, and ought instantly to have given up the enterprise. If we were invited to other parts of the coast, what did we do at the Helder? Let ministers justify themselves if they can, by producing the documents upon which their conduct was founded.—On the 22nd of August, sir Ralph Abercromby, with 10,000 men, got possession of the Helder. On the 27th, he was reinforced by General Don's detachment, which placed him at the head of 15,000 men. Is it not strange that 15,000 men headed by an able general, and going by invitation, should think it imprudent to advance? If the Dutch were well affected, why did they not instantly declare themselves? No French troops were in Holland to keep them in awe. Yet no one testified the smallest attachment to our cause, and from that moment the enterprise was hopeless. On sir Ralph's account I wish for an enquiry. I am sure it would turn out to his honour. There are questions which he alone can answer. Why did not the duke of York sail at the same time with general Don? Why were all our forces sent to one place; and 43,000 men cooped up in a narrow peninsula, where but few could act at a time? This is a point which only military men can determine, and the House is bound to examine officers, that they may discover the truth: 45,000 men were six weeks in Holland, and were unable to advance above twenty-five miles. Yet there is nobody to blame! If the duke of Marlborough had commanded the army, its operations would, I believe, have been equally unsuccessful. But whether the duke of York concluded the capitulation from instructions he had received, or of his own accord, he, in my opinion, should have demanded an enquiry. The matter rests between him and and the right hon. gentleman. Ministers refuse an enquiry; he therefore should have insisted upon one. This is the only way in which he can shift the disgrace from himself and the gallant officers who served under him, to those upon whom it ought to lie. The capitulation fixes an indelible stain upon the national character. A king's son, commanding 40,000 men capitulated to a French general who had only 31,000. We owe it to our sovereign, and we owe it to our constituents to inquire strictly into the causes of this unheard of disgrace.

Mr. *Perceval* said, that the material object of the inquiry moved this evening, was, to ascertain if there was any blame imputable for the partial failure of the expedition, and to whom that blame was imputable. It had been conceded, that the object of the expedition was British, that the conduct of our commanders and soldiers had been glorious, and that one great object of the expedition had been gained by the surrender of the Dutch fleet. An hon. gentleman had said, that if the expedition had terminated with the capture of the Dutch fleet, it would have conferred immortal honour on this country. But if the expedition had terminated here, he thought that it would have brought immortal disgrace on the country. It would have been a swindling trick, a shameful attempt to cheat the Dutch out of their fleet. The difficulty of an inquiry had been endeavoured to be obviated, by alleging that the business might be conducted in a secret committee; but he doubted much of the secrecy which would be the result of such a plan. He allowed that capitulation, abstractedly considered, was not a very honourable conclusion to a military expedition; but that was a mere abstract consideration. Two of the three grand objects of the expedition were attained; the

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Dutch fleet was captured; and a powerful diversion was effected in favour of our allies. The third was found not attainable. The consideration then was, how the return of our troops to their own country could be best effected. And the expedient that had been adopted for this purpose, appeared to him to be the best that could be adopted. It was not disgraceful, because it was merely an adaptation to circumstances, which were countenanced by the attainment of the other objects of the expedition.

Mr. *M. A. Taylor* hoped that parliament would inquire into the miscarriage of an enterprise, upon which so much of the blood and treasure of the nation had been expended to no effect. To a certain degree it had succeeded; but when an army of above 30,000 men had entered Holland without being able to accomplish any thing like the object they had in view, some satisfactory reason should be adduced for so marked a miscarriage.

Mr. Sheridan replied. After which, the House divided:

Tellers.

YEAS,	Mr. Whitbread - - - - Mr. W. J. Denison - -	45
NOES,	Mr. Perceval - - - - - Mr. Sargent - - - - - -	216

So it passed in the negative.

Debate in the Lords on the Failure of the Expedition to Holland.] Feb. 12. Lord *Holland* rose and said:—My lords; I should have rejoiced, had the task I have imposed upon myself fallen to the lot of another; for I am fully aware of all the difficulties I have to encounter. Till within these very few days, I did indeed imagine, that though we might differ as to the propriety of an inquiry, the fact of failure was one which would not be disputed. But I find that it is to be contended, that the result of the expedition has been glorious, that it has been profitable, that it has been satisfactory! I ask, however, what every plain man must and does think of an army of 45,000 men buying permission to evacuate a country they came to conquer, and from an inferior force? Is this glorious? Is this honourable? Is this a failure, or is it not? Can any man doubt whether disgrace has been incurred? It has been stated, that the loss of the British in this expedition was only 800. I am happy to hear it. This alone, if it be true, would be a good reason for inquiry. It is fit that the public should learn this consolatory fact in some more authentic manner.—But it is said, the expedition succeeded as a diversion of the enemy's forces, and in the capture of the Dutch fleet. It must be observed, however, that whatever policy, whatever advantage there may be in creating a diversion of the enemy's forces, this forms no justification of a particular expedition, and of a specific attempt. It is quite a different thing to say, that it is good to distract the enemy's attention, and to say that you have done it in the best and most effectual manner. Doubtless the expedition occasioned some diversion of the enemy's troops, but not so much as might have been produced had the attempt been made in some other quarter; for our army was opposed, in a great measure, by Batavian forces, who, in all probability, would not have been employed in any other operations. The capture of the Dutch fleet too, we are told, is of itself a sufficient justification of the expedition, and a sufficient reward for our exertions. Whatever may be the value of this capture, it is not to be admitted as a set-off for the expense and the bloodshed which the enterprise has occasioned. If the expedition was undertaken to rescue Holland from the dominion of France, and to restore the stadtholder to his authority, how can the Dutch fleet be a compensation for the absolute failure of these objects? But the Dutch fleet was in our possession before our army was put in motion to carry into effect the other objects which ministers professed to have principally in view: the Dutch fleet, therefore, was not the cause of prosecuting the attempt; it can form no justification for our farther attempt in that quarter. We are told that the people of Holland were favourable to our cause: be it so? What is the inference? If, with the Dutch in our favour, an army of 45,000 men was obliged to purchase its escape, what stronger argument can be conceived for inquiry? Let us then examine the wisdom of the design, and the execution. Before any man of sense engages in an undertaking, he considers how far the object is desirable, how far he is likely to succeed in it, and what will be the consequences of failure. To rescue Holland from French dominion, to restore the Dutch to their ancient alliance with this country, to reinstate the stadtholder, certainly are ob-

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jects which, provided they are practicable and just, are desirable to the interest of Great Britain. I say, provided they are just; for even the claims of the stadtholder upon this country, strong as they are, would not justify the attempt in opposition to the sense of the people of Holland. I come now to the unavoidable inconveniences, which, though I allow they are not sufficient to deter one from an undertaking, are of no inconsiderable weight in the balance of a doubtful project. Among these the expense should have been considered, and the great distress of the season. Did not the situation of Ireland also form an objection? Was not the defenceless state in which these exertions left that country, a hazardous experiment? Was not the breaking down the militia system a great inconvenience? But another circumstance to be examined is, whether, in case of failure, you do not incur disadvantages greater than the advantages you reap from success. Now, examine it in that way, what have been the consequences of our failure? Has it not thrown Holland more than ever into the power of France? What reason had ministers to suppose that the Dutch were well disposed to our cause? Did they evince any such disposition? But it may be said, that they had no opportunity. Take this either way: if they had an opportunity of joining our cause, it is evident by their backwardness that they were not inclined to support it. If they had no opportunity, how did it come to pass, that with an army of 45,000 men, we never could hold out that hope of protection which could induce men to flock to our standard? If the place of landing was ill calculated to display our strength, and to entice partisans, is not this a glaring proof of the misconduct of those who contrived the plan of the expedition? From the first action at the Helder, we had reason to despair of any co-operation from the Dutch soldiers. Then the action was sustained entirely by Batavian troops. On the 2nd of September, indeed, these had been joined by French troops, but they displayed the same obstinate resistance. We ought, from that moment, to have despaired of any advantage from the prosecution of the attempt in this quarter.—But if the disposition of the inhabitants was really favourable, we ought to have employed such means as were calculated to conciliate their confidence, and obtain their co-operation. Was this the manner in which we acted? The employment of Russian troops was not calculated to conciliate the people of Holland.—But the Dutch are said to be averse to the yoke of France. I believe they are; but it does not follow that they prefer the dominion of England, and the authority of the stadtholder. I believe that, of the two, the Dutch would rather be as they were in 1792, than as they are now; but I suspect that the difference of their situation is not, in their minds, so great as to warrant the risk of a war. The Dutch have many and crying grievances against the French; and he must be a bad Dutchman who does not feel that they have: nevertheless, all that has been said about French tyranny in Holland is not true. We call them plunderers, murderers, atheists, and all the hard names we can invent; but have they exercised any extraordinary severities in Holland? Have there been any great political persecution? Has there been any religious persecution whatsoever? And even as to plunder, the Dutch have less to complain than most nations dependent on one more powerful than themselves.—But I would ask, have the Dutch no grievances against us? For many years they have been estranged from our interest and connexion. The proceedings in 1787 proved, that a great party was hostile to the influence of this country, and favourable to that of France. They may be averse to the dominion of France; but would they prefer a stadtholder, supported by Russian armies, and under the guidance of British counsels? We ought, in this last attempt, to have been peculiarly careful, to say nothing, and to do nothing, that could excite the suspicions of the people in Holland. But were we so? In a public paper of lord Duncan's, the Prince of Orange is called "legitimate sovereign," an expression sufficient to excite alarm throughout Holland. I mention not this with any intention of imputing blame to the gallant admiral; God forbid! but I impute blame to those who employed him, for not instructing him carefully in the language that it was necessary to hold; for I do say, that it gave a plausible pretence on which to raise alarms in Holland that more was intended than the mere restoration of the office of stadtholder.—I come now to the military operations. Of these I speak with the greatest diffidence. One circumstance, indeed, it is pleasant for me

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to reflect upon, that, defective as the plan of military operations seems to have been, none of the fault attaches itself to the illustrious commander, the gallant officers who served under him, or the brave army which he commanded. I hold ministers responsible for the whole. But, my lords, glorious as was the conduct of our soldiers, there is one person who has dared, in the face of all Europe, to stigmatise their behaviour. In the Petersburgh Gazette, general D'Essen expressly states, that, in the action of the 8th, we failed to attack at the time agreed upon; that by this their countrymen were sacrificed; and that the Russian army was in want of every necessary with which we were bound to furnish them. My lords, will you not vindicate the honour of your army from these foul aspersions? Are our alliances to be purchased by a sacrifice of the courage and the honour of our army? Are these great objects to be meanly yielded up to satisfy the whims of any court?—But to return to the military operations. On the 27th of August the landing at the Helder was effected, after a severe action. Another engagement took place on the 2nd of September, after the Dutch troops, who alone had been engaged on the first day, had been joined by French reinforcements. Now I ask, why Sir Ralph Abercromby did not advance after the advantages he had gained? That most excellent officer, must by that time have ascertained the dispositions of the people. The place where the landing was effected, was not calculated for the operations of a large army: crowded in that small track of land, a large force, if it had arrived, could not at once be brought into action. Reinforcements were naturally arriving every day from France. I ask, therefore, to what the delay of sir Ralph is to be attributed? Was it for want of supplies? Was it not in consequence of orders? Was it that he despaired of any advantage from prosecuting the attempt? I deliver no opinion on this subject, but I ask you to inquire. Perhaps inquiry would show that the delay was necessary, was right, was well judged. But again, if it was so, it must have been foreseen; and then I ask, why attempt the expedition at so late a season of the year? To this, and to all other reasonings, it may be answered, all was well arranged, all was well prepared, all was well conducted; but unforeseen and improbable events, hurricanes, bad seasons, &c. intervened; and to this, and this only, failure is to be ascribed. To which I reply, inquire. If ministers resist inquiry, I must believe that it is because they know their conduct cannot bear investigation. I have enumerated some of the advantages that must result from inquiry. You will re-establish the character of your army. We know that it is natural to impute the blame of unsuccessful military operations to the commander, or army. In this country such blame may not be imputed; but in Europe the charge will be made, and it stands supported by the statements of general D'Essen, in the Petersburgh Gazette. It is necessary to demonstrate the truth by a fair investigation. By no other course can you satisfy the demands of your national honour and your military reputation. At a moment, too, when it is decided that the war should be continued to a period which we cannot fix in idea; when new expeditions are, it is rumoured, about to be undertaken, it becomes you to ascertain how they are likely to be conducted, by inquiring what has been the ability and the wisdom displayed in other instances by those who plan and conduct them. I move therefore, "That this House do resolve itself into a Committee, to inquire into the Causes of the Failure of the late Expedition to Holland."

The Earl of *Moira* coincided with the noble lord in his sentiments respecting the illustrious personage who conducted the expedition. That he did not appear in his seat on the present occasion, he was convinced proceeded from delicacy, lest his presence might repress the full disclosure of opinion upon a question in which he felt himself so deeply interested. Were that illustrious personage to yield to the impulse of his own mind, he was satisfied he would solicit inquiry; but the great objection was, that it necessarily connected itself with the public good, and therefore he preferred to submit to ill-grounded calumny, rather than risk the interest of the country by a personal vindication. As to the general question, he put it to the candour of the noble lord not to press it against men who stood upon a ground where it was impossible they could make a defence. The difficulty of operations in Holland was admitted, and that such an enterprise could not succeed without the co-operation of its inhabitants: that ministers were aware of this, and were confident of such co-

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operation, it was therefore natural to presume; but this very circumstance was a sufficient argument against inquiry. The dilemma then proposed by the noble lord, whether or not the people had an opportunity to rise, he was desirous should not be entertained. To determine that point, to justify the confidence of co-operation, would inevitably lead to the most dangerous disclosures, to the public designation of our friends in that country, their number and situation, and of the whole correspondence on which the confidence of co-operation was founded, and the practicability of the object presumed; a procedure that might not only prove injurious at the present, but interfere with all future operations of a similar kind. In candour, therefore, to all the parties concerned, he trusted the noble lord would not press his motion.

Earl *Spencer* was at a loss to know on what grounds the motion would be made. He confessed it was one of those difficult things that could be thrown in the way of ministers; for on their silence suspicion was attempted to be thrown, and their disclosure of, the circumstances must lead to serious consequences. He would assert, that the expedition was taken up on justifiable grounds. The noble lord had made many omissions, and had dwelt upon such parts of the expedition as tended to set it in the most unfavourable point of view. The noble lord acknowledged that the expedition had objects sufficiently important to induce this country to undertake it. He admitted, that to rescue Holland, and to cause a diversion in the forces of the enemy, were legitimate objects. He admitted that the capture of the Dutch fleet was an advantage gained for the country. On these two points, the expedition had not failed; of three objects, two had succeeded most completely. The House would call to mind the month when the expedition took place, and to what good effect it operated in favour of the allies. The signal defeats which the enemy experienced, was one of the good effects occasioned by this expedition; for it was fair to infer, that the forces called into action in Holland, as withdrawn from the French in Italy and Switzerland, tended to weaken their efforts and increase the force of the combined armies.

Lord *King* delivered his maiden speech in support of the inquiry. He observed, that as ministers had declared their determination to continue the war, it became the duty of the House to investigate their conduct in the last expedition, in order to ascertain whether they ought to be entrusted with the farther prosecution of hostilities. If he referred to "the test of experience and the evidence of facts," the favourite phrase of administration, he had still stronger grounds for inquiry; for the incapacity of ministers had been already manifested by the expeditions to Corsica, Toulon, Quiberon, and Ostend. With respect to the weather and the unfavourable winds which had prevailed, that consideration could not be urged in their defence, as ministers had sufficient time to make every preparation. The object was clear and precise, and lay at the distance of only forty-eight hours sail. And was it not the duty of administration to run as few risks as possible? If there appeared even a faint chance of failure from any inclemency of the weather, why was not the expedition undertaken in June or July, when that chance would have been considerably lessened? The House could not forget the two inquiries which had been instituted during the American war; and at present the grounds for a similar proceeding were much strengthened, since administration, being possessed of unlimited means, both in a financial and military view, was of course more responsible for the use and application of those means. If our object was, to impose and establish a strong government in Holland, such an object was not legitimate, as it went to interfere in the wishes of the people of that country. The proposed inquiry was absolutely necessary for the vindication of ministers.

After a short speech against the motion from lord Darnley, and a reply from lord Holland, the House divided: Contents, 6. Not-Contents, 51.

Debate on Mr. Whitbread's Bill to regulate the Wages of Labourers in Husbandry.] Feb. 11. Mr. *Whitbread* rose to move for leave to bring in a bill to explain and amend the act which regulates the wages of labourers and husbandmen. When he had first the honour of making a similar motion, his proposition was assented to *nem. con.** After he had brought in his bill, and only upon the motion for its being read a second time, the chancellor of the exchequer objected to the

* See Vol. 32 p. 705.

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provisions of it, observing, that a thorough revision of the Poor laws was necessary; and he pledged himself to bring in a bill for that purpose. The bill was brought in and printed, but was never brought under the discussion of the House. All its provisions were regarded as impracticable. Finding that the right hon. gentleman had given up all idea of prosecuting a measure which he formerly seemed to have so much at heart, he himself was determined to renew his attempts, and to revive his bill. Those who knew him would not suppose that he wished the poor to be overpaid. He was well aware that in many places, especially in great manufacturing towns, those who earned more than was sufficient to provide for their families, usually squandered the surplus away, in ruinous luxuries. But in every well-regulated community, artificers and labourers should be paid so as to be enabled to keep themselves and families in a comfortable situation. It was his creed with respect to the poor, that no excuse should be left them for doing wrong, and that when they offended, severity should be employed in punishing their offences. He hoped the House would concur with him in that opinion; and if so, how was it to be reduced to practice? The right hon. gentleman had contended, that nothing effectual could be done by regulations, that all must be the result of principle: and that, in amending the Poor laws, no regulation could be made respecting the amount of wages, but that labour should be left to find its own level. It was impossible, however, that labour should find its own level, as the laws on that head now stood. What first gave rise, in his mind, to the idea of the bill he wished to introduce, was, the situation to which the poor were reduced in 1795. Their distresses then were nearly the same as they are now; and very exemplary attention was likewise then shown by the richer classes to alleviate their distresses, but, before they received that relief, the pressure under which they laboured was extreme. The farmers would not raise the price of labour: he consulted the Statute-book, but could discover nothing in it that would compel the farmers to do their duty. The justices, he found, had no power to grant relief; but they were armed with power to oppress the poor, In virtue of the fifth Elizabeth, c. 4, the justices had the power of regulating the maximum of labour. This was highly oppressive to the labouring poor. A law therefore appeared necessary for enabling the justices to regulate also the minimum of labour. In this view, he submitted his motion for reviving his former bill. He wished only that it might be read a first time, and then printed, and a proper interval allowed for a thorough consideration of it. The bill would go, not to compel, but to enable the magistrate to do justice to the poor. The law indeed, if enacted, might generally lie dormant, and only be enforced in hard times, when the poor were oppressed as they now are in several districts. The more he examined the Poor laws, the more convinced he was, that the fault lay not in the laws themselves, but in the execution of them. Where they were well executed, the poor enjoyed as much comfort as it was possible for them to enjoy. But where they were not duly enforced, the poor endured the most intolerable miseries. To prevent these abuses was the object of his bill. He would therefore move, "That leave be given to bring in a bill to explain and amend so much of the 5th Eliz. cap. 4. as empowers justices of the peace to regulate the wages of Labourers in Husbandry."

Mr. *Pitt* said, though he disapproved of the measure, he would not oppose the motion. He opposed the measure formerly, because he was convinced it would not be productive of benefit to the lower classes: not because he intended to bring forward some preferable plan. The measure now proposed struck him as highly improper. It went to introduce legislative interference into that which ought to be allowed invariably to take its natural course. The greater freedom there was allowed in every kind of mercantile transactions, the more for the benefit of all parties. It was likewise always inexpedient to frame a general law to remedy a particular evil. Besides, the principle of the bill was inefficacious; and if adopted, it would have no good effect. It proposed one standard for the price of labour, without considering whether the labourer was young or old, whether sickly or robust, whether an unmarried man, or a man with a numerous family to support. The distresses of the poor would be best relieved, not by any general law, but by parochial aid administered by those who were intimately acquainted with their situation. The hon. gentleman said, that

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the Poor laws were quite sufficient, if they were strictly put in execution. Now, it seemed rather strange that they should be complete, and yet should not contain within them some power to enforce their execution. He himself admired the system of Poor laws in England, though they had of late years greatly degenerated from their original simplicity and efficacy. It had not been his intention to overturn them, but to recall them to their original principles, and to give them such subsidiary aids, as a change of circumstances had rendered necessary. Whether he should bring that bill again before the House was extremely uncertain. He was convinced of its propriety; but many objections had been started to it, by those whose opinion he was bound to respect.

Sir *W. Young* was of opinion, that the bill was altogether unnecessary. The justices were already obliged, under a penalty of 10*l.* to do nearly what was required by the hon. gentleman; and was it probable that an act was a good one which though enforced by such severe penalties, had lain completely dormant for many years? The qualifications of the workman should be considered as well as his wages.

Mr. *Buxton* thought that the measure would do more harm than good. The scarcity was great but, from the benevolent attentions of the opulent, at no time was the condition of the labourer more eligible.

Mr. *Ellison* opposed the motion. By the generous exertions of the higher classes, the poorer had been comfortably supported. Why then introduce a law which was unnecessary?

Mr. *Whitbread* said, he was ready to give the higher classes credit for their charity; but he thought it an alarming thing, that so many of the lower classes of society was doomed to subsist on charity. By an increase of wages some good might be done. Charity afflicted the mind of a good man, because it took away his independence—a consideration as valuable to the labourer as to the man of high rank. The object of the bill was to empower magistrates, for a limited time, and within a limited extent, to determine the sum below which the wages of a labouring man in full vigour should not be reduced. But it was said, that the price of labour would find its level. How did it find its level? If labourers found they were not sufficiently paid, they combined, and the price of their labour was raised. The multiplied statutes to prevent combinations operated more strongly against the labourers in any attempt to raise their wages, than against the masters who might attempt to reduce them.

Leave was given. On the 13th the bill was brought in and read a first time. On the 21st the question, that the bill be now read a second time, was negatived, and, on the motion of lord Belgrave, it was ordered to be read a second time upon that day six months.

First Report of the Committee of the House of Commons respecting the Assize of Bread, and the Deficiency of the last Crop of Grain.] Feb. 10. Lord Hawkesbury presented the following

REPORT.

The Committee appointed to consider of means for rendering more effectual the provisions of an act, made in the thirteenth year of the reign of his present Majesty, intituled, "An Act for better regulating the Assize and making of Bread;" and who were instructed to consider of the most effectual means of remedying any inconveniencies which may arise from the deficiency of the last Crop of Grain; and empowered to report their Proceedings, from time to time, to the House;

Have proceeded, in pursuance of the orders of the House, to consider of the provisions of the said act; and are decidedly of opinion, that the act of the 13th of George 3rd in its present state, is completely ineffectual for the purposes for which it was intended; that the regulations contained in it are, in many respects, defective; and that the execution of it would be totally incompatible with the present mode of setting the assize of bread by law, and would answer no object, unless, at a time when bakers are prohibited from making, according to the demand of their customers, different kinds of bread, millers should be prohibited from manufacturing different sorts of flour.

Your Committee proceeded next to consider how far it might be proper to recommend to the House to adopt such farther regulations and restrictions; and as they understood a prejudice existed in some parts of the country against any coarser sort of bread than that which is at present known by the name of the "Fine Household Bread," on the ground that the former was less wholesome and nutricious than the latter, they thought it important to obtain the opinions of some eminent and respectable physicians on this point. The result of their evidence appears to be,

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that although a change of any sort of food, which forms so great a part of the sustenance of man, might, for a time, affect some constitutions; that as soon as persons were habituated to it, the standard wheaten bread, or even bread of a coarser sort, would be equally wholesome with the fine wheaten bread which is now generally used in the metropolis; but that, in their opinion, the fine wheaten bread would go farther with persons who have no other food, than the same quantity of bread of a coarser sort.

Your Committee were next desirous of ascertaining, whether a standard bread was likely to be acceptable to the people of this metropolis; they have examined for this purpose several considerable bakers, who agree in stating, that scarcely any bread is consumed in the metropolis but that which is made from the fine wheaten flour; that attempts have been formerly made in times of scarcity to introduce a coarser species of bread into use, but without success; and that, in their opinion, the high price of bread would be considered, by the lower classes of people, as a small evil, when compared with any measures which would have the effect of compelling them to consume a bread to which they have not been accustomed.

Your Committee then proceeded to inquire, whether a measure, which compelled the millers to manufacture only one sort of flour, would be likely to increase the quantity of sustenance for man. It has been stated to your Committee, that, according to the mode of manufacturing flour for London and its neighbourhood, a bushel of wheat, weighing 60 lbs. produced 47 lbs. of flour, of all descriptions, which were applied in various ways directly to the sustenance of man; that about 1 lb. was the waste in grinding, and the remaining 12 lbs. consisted of bran and pollards, which were made use of for feeding poultry, swine, and cattle. It has, however, been suggested, that if only one sort of flour was permitted to be made, and a different mode of dressing it was adopted, so as to leave in it the finer pollards, 52 lbs. of flour might be extracted from a bushel of wheat, of the before-mentioned weight, instead of 47 lbs.; that this proportion of the wheat would afford a wholesome and nutritious food, and would add to the quantity for the sustenance of man, in places where the fine household bread is now used, 5 lbs. on every bushel, or somewhat more than one-ninth. But as this saving is computed on a finer wheat, and of greater weight per bushel than the average of the crop may produce, and can only apply to those places which have been stated, and as a coarser bread is actually in use in many parts of the country, the saving on the whole consumption would, according to the calculation, be very considerably reduced.

Your Committee have considered how far other circumstances might operate, or the saving likely to be made of flour by adopting this proposition. They beg leave, in the first place, to observe, that if the physicians are well founded in their opinion, that bread of a coarser quality will not go equally far with a fine wheaten bread, an increased consumption of bread would be the consequence of the measure, and this increased consumption might, in a considerable degree, make up for any saving which might result from the use of the finer pollards. In the second place, if the millers were permitted to make only one sort of flour, it is to be apprehended, that sieves would be introduced into many private families, for the purpose of sifting the flour to different degrees of fineness: such a practice might, in times of scarcity, increase the evils which it would be the intention of parliament to remedy. The quantity of flour extracted from a bushel of wheat depends very much on the skill of the miller, and the perfection of his machinery. The extent of his concerns, and his interest in his trade, is a security that he will endeavour to draw from the grain whatever it will produce; but the comparative want of skill, and want of attention to the nicer parts of the operation, in private families, might lead, upon the whole, to a very great and unnecessary expenditure and waste of flour.

Your Committee are of opinion, that to change by law the food of a large part of the community, is a measure of the greatest delicacy, and on the face of it highly objectionable. If a considerable benefit could be proved to arise from it to the community at large, your Committee might be induced to recommend it, notwithstanding any inconveniencies which might for a time result from it; but from all the consideration your Committee have been able to give to this subject, and from the evidence which has appeared before them, they are not satisfied that any saving would arise proportionate to the disadvantages that would, in the first instance, necessarily attend upon it.

Your Committee have hitherto confined their observations to the idea of compelling the people, by law, to consume a particular sort of bread. They are sorry, however, to be under the necessity of stating, that, in consequence of the last wet and unfavourable season, the crops have been unusually deficient; and although a considerable importation of wheat from foreign countries has already taken place, and more may be expected, yet they feel, that they should not discharge their duty, unless they strongly recommended to all individuals to use every means in their power to reduce the consumption of wheaten flour in their families, and encourage in the district in which they live, by their example, influence, and authority, every possible economy of this article.

Impressed with the idea of the importance of such economy at the present moment, your Committee earnestly recommend the adoption of a measure, which, from the una-

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nimous opinion of those who have appeared in evidence before them, would lead to a very considerable saving of wheat flour. The evidence of the bakers who have been examined before your Committee, cannot fail to convince the House, that in families where bread which has been baked for some hours is used, the consumption is far less considerable than in those where it is the custom to eat it new. They differ in the proportion of this saving: some have stated it as amounting to one-third, some as amounting to one-fifth, and others only to one-eighth; but when it is considered that one-half of the bread in London is consumed the day on which it is baked, there can be no doubt that a great saving would ensue (perhaps one-tenth or twelfth part of the whole consumption in London), if the bakers were prohibited from selling it, until twenty-four hours after it was baked. Your Committee are strongly induced to recommend this measure, from the consideration that a very respectable physician has given it as his decided opinion, that new bread is far less wholesome than that which has been baked a certain number of hours: and they think it important to add, that, in the opinion of the bakers in the metropolis, no material inconvenience or detriment to their trade would arise from the adopting this regulation.

Your Committee have heard, with very great concern, that from the mistaken application of the charity of individuals, in some parts of the country, flour and bread have been delivered to the poor at a reduced price; a practice which may contribute very considerably to increase the inconveniencies arising from the deficiency of the last crop. And they recommend that all charity and parochial relief should be given, as far as is practicable, in any other articles except bread, flour, and money, and that the part of it which is necessary for the sustenance of the poor, should be distributed in soups, rice, potatoes, or other substitutes. Your Committee are of opinion, that if this regulation was generally adopted, it would not only, in a very great degree, contribute to economize at this time the consumption of flour, but that it might have the effect of gradually introducing into use, a more wholesome and nutritious species of food than that to which the poor are at present accustomed.

Your Committee think it important to state before they conclude, that government, in conformity to the declaration of the chancellor of the exchequer in the last session of parliament, have abstained from all interference in the purchases of corn in the foreign markets; and as they conceive the speculations of individuals are more likely to produce an adequate supply of foreign wheat at the present crisis, than any other measures that could be adopted, the policy of government in this respect meets with the decided approbation of your Committee.

The King's Message respecting Advances to the Emperor of Germany, &c.] Feb. 13. Mr. Pitt presented the following Message from his Majesty:

"GEORGE *R.*

"His Majesty is at present employed in concerting such engagements with the emperor of Germany, the elector of Bavaria, and other powers of the empire, as may strengthen the efforts of his imperial majesty, and materially conduce to the advantage of the common cause in the course of the ensuing campaign; and his Majesty will give directions that these engagements, as soon as they shall have been completed and ratified, shall be laid before the House: But, in order to ensure the benefit of this co-operation at an early period, his Majesty is desirous of authorising his minister to make provisionally such advances as may be necessary, in the first instance, for this purpose; and his Majesty recommends it to the House to enable him to make such provision accordingly. G. *R.*"

A similar Message was presented to the Lords by lord Grenville.

Debate in the Lords on the King's Message respecting Advances to the Emperor of Germany, &c.] Feb. 14. The order of the day being read, for taking the King's Message into consideration,

Lord *Grenville* said, he conceived after the uniform votes of the House, on the subject of prosecuting the war with vigour, that it would be an idle waste of time were he to enter into detail on the matter under consideration. It had been generally admitted by parliament, that it was the truest policy of Great Britain to procure the assistance of the forces of continental states, by subsidizing their sovereigns; and upon that received principle it was, that his majesty had negotiated with the German princes, for a certain number of military forces for the ensuing campaign. Indeed, these treaties were in such forwardness, that although he could not officially state that they were concluded, he could take upon himself to declare to their lordships, that by this time the principal of them were finally settled, and upon terms highly advantageous to the country. As the sending the treaties over here, and the return of them previous to their final ratification, unavoidably took up much time, his majesty's ministers had thought it their duty to apply to parliament, to authorize them to make such advances pro-

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visionally to our German allies as the conditions of the respective treaties might require. His lordship then moved, "That an humble Address be presented to his majesty, to return to his majesty, the thanks of this House for his most gracious message; that impressed as we are with the necessity of the vigorous prosecution of the war, we assure his majesty that we will readily concur in enabling him to make such advances as may be necessary with a view to the engagements which his majesty is now negotiating for the advantage of the common cause, in the course of the ensuing campaign."

Lord *Holland* said, that if the purport of the present measure was merely to exchange Russian for German mercenaries, to that he not only should have no objection, but should even think we gained by the exchange. In the first place, we should gain by knowing that those we employed rendered the horrors of war less heart-breaking, less disgusting than those we intended to employ. We should also gain in point of soldiers; for he was happy to say that the troops of Austria, Prussia, France, and England, were greatly their superiors in all the qualifications necessary to form a powerful army. But it was not a mere exchange of troops: we were to subsidize German troops instead of Russians: but were German troops ready to contend for the same objects? Did the cabinet of Vienna cordially approve of all the principles laid down in our answer to Buonaparté? Did the emperor of Germany really think that the surest means of restoring peace would be the restoration of the Bourbons? Did he not rather imagine that the sacrifice of the territories of his fellow hireling, the elector of Bavaria, to his ambitious projects, would be a shorter measure? At the same time, the statesmen of Vienna had too much wisdom to limit the possibility of peace to the success of their favourite projects. Like our prudent ministers, they would allow that other events might possibly lead to that desirable end: a slice of Switzerland perhaps; a great portion of Italy, or any other cession of territory, might be among the events, and the imperial court did not, he would venture to say, lay claim to prescribe exactly what sacrifices on the part of France would gratify her ambition, and restore the blessings of peace. She had already made one peace with the republic, and was, no doubt, ready to make another. With this view of the coalition, and called upon to put our trust in this particular part of it, he begged the House to pause before they entangled themselves in new engagements, before they voted away their money, and pledged themselves to an undertaking so difficult in its accomplishment, so ruinous in its failure. Let them examine the propriety of continuing the war by the desirableness of the object, the effect of success towards the attainment of that object, the consequences of failure, and the probability of success. He would first suppose the armies of our allies triumphant every where. Were the ministers certain that these triumphs would tend to restore royalty in France, or even annihilate the power and influence of that country? Would they, in case of success, answer for the conduct of Austria? He would suppose a sincere conversion in the cabinet of Vienna, and their arms attended with the greatest success. He would suppose them in possession of Switzerland, entering on the French territories, fighting in Alsace and Lorraine: well, let us at least examine, if with such extraordinary success and good faith, our point would be gained. He conjured the House to reflect on this, and to dismiss, for one moment, that childish feeling, too prevalent in this country, that foreign states and princes were moral or immoral, politic or impolitic, in exact proportion as they furthered or thwarted the interests of Great Britain. Let the House reflect that the king of Prussia was not bound by any oath of allegiance, to promote our designs, or render his power subservient to British objects; but that he was bound by that duty which all sovereigns owed to their situation, to secure the interests of his subjects, and the power and influence of his state; and then he would ask any man, at all candid or impartial, whether, if he were minister to his Prussian majesty, he could, consistently with his duty, advise that prince to sit tamely by and see the hereditary rival of his house, the power most formidable to his own, from its situation and its general politics, crush and dismember the country of France, which could alone operate as a check to that rival; which could alone protect him from the effects of that powerful house, directed by ancient animosity to the object of annihilating his influence, and destroying his power in Germany and in Europe? Why then, what would be the consequence even of success. It would be (unless the

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councils of Prussia were suddenly to become at once base and stupid) the immediate interference of that power to rescue France from our designs, and to defeat the accomplishment of that object to which we were sacrificing so much.—He would now look to the other side of the picture—he would suppose us and our allies beaten—he would suppose the armies of Buonaparté triumphant. What would then be the resource of ministers? He knew enough of their character, not to know that they would then have recourse to negotiation, to what Mr. Burke happily termed their "mendicant diplomacy," When well beaten and defeated in all their designs, they would pretend to have had experience of Buonaparté's government, and then see other possible and speedier means of peace than the restoration of the Bourbons. They would be as mean and crouching in their overtures of peace to Buonaparté, as they had been insolent in their answers to his overtures lately. But could they expect, they who had treated him as the most insolent and violent of mankind, that he would be actuated with such equity and moderation as to grant to their supplications, when defeated, that peace which they had refused to him with disdain when they imagined him in adversity?—The noble lord then proceeded to state the inconveniences of subsidies, and the little faith that was to be placed in the promises of courts. We had subsidized almost every German prince, and almost every German prince had deceived and betrayed us; but he must confess that when he reflected on the amount, the consequences, and the little advantage this country had hitherto derived from subsidies, he had hoped that a subsidy was one of the few measures to which parliament would not, without much deliberation consent. For his part, he could not see without regret and alarm, large sums of money sent out of the kingdom, merely to purchase for ourselves treachery and disappointment, and to the house of Austria additional territory and aggrandizement. He conjured the House, therefore, since they had that night learnt that reliance upon that cabinet was to be one of their chief hopes of success, to reflect again, and not to engage in an undertaking so desperate in its appearance, in which success itself seemed only to lead to new wars, new expenses, and new embarrassments, and in which failure, which seemed but too probable, was little short of disgrace and ruin.

The House divided: Contents, 28; Not-contents, 8.

Debate in the Commons on the King's Message respecting Advances to the Emperor of Germany, &c.] Feb. 17. The House having resolved itself into a Committee of Supply, to which the King's Message was referred,

Mr. *Pitt* rose and said:—The motion which I shall submit to the committee, is founded upon a principle which has been often recognized in this House, that we are to proceed in a vigorous prosecution of the war; a measure which we feel to be necessary to the safety, honour, and happiness of the country. Those who are of opinion that government acted wisely in declining negotiation at this period with the enemy, will not be backward in consenting to continue, or, if necessary, to augment the force that may be deemed proper to be used in the common cause. And even those who recommend negotiation will, I hope, acquiesce in the measure I am going to propose. After the brilliant achievements of last year, it is not for me to say how much is to be expected from the imperial arms. I am aware, that there is in the minds of some, a supposition that there may not be the same co-operation of both the imperial courts. I take this opportunity of stating, that there is no reason to believe that the emperor of Russia will not employ his arms to the same extent, if to any extent, against France, in conjunction with Austria. But even if there were grounds of apprehension that his imperial majesty would withdraw all co-operation, I should urge that as an additional reason for the measure which his majesty has taken; and the committee will learn with satisfaction, that the force from the power of Germany will be greater in the ensuing campaign than it was in the last. I should therefore expect the concurrence of the committee to any measure which may be likely to farther so desirable an object. At this period of the year, we cannot have the treaties ready to be laid before parliament: therefore the House cannot judge ultimately on the scheme; but there is already enough before us to make it incumbent on parliament, to enable his majesty to make such advances as may prevent the enemy from taking advantage of delay, or of preventing the campaign from being opened with vigour.—It is proposed, that

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500,000*l.* should be advanced by way of commencement. The object of it is to secure the co-operation of such a force as is likely to be superior to any force the French can bring to the frontier. The total amount of the advances, will probably be two millions and a half. I shall now move, "That a sum not exceeding 500,000*l.* be granted to his majesty, to enable his majesty to make such advances as may be necessary for the purpose of ensuring, at an early period, the benefit of a vigorous co-operation against France, in consequence of the engagements which his majesty is concerting with the emperor of Germany, the elector of Bavaria, and the other powers of the empire."

Mr. *Nicholls* said, that he wished, before he could agree to send such a sum of money out of the kingdom, to ascertain what quantity of corn would be necessary for the supply of the wants of this country. The last crop had been deficient a full fourth. This would leave two millions of quarters of wheat to be purchased to supply the deficiency. Could this quantity be procured from the Baltic. What would be the expense at which this grain could be purchased? He himself thought that 12,000,000*l.* was not over-rating the expense. He hoped the committee would pause before they consented to adopt a measure which might interfere with the interests and prevent the relief of the poor of this country, or, if prosecuted, affect our commercial credit.

Mr. *Bouverie* said, that the overture for negotiation had, in his opinion, been treated insolently. Had it appeared, that every measure had been taken to secure an honourable peace, then if it had failed, there was scarcely a man in the country who would not have considered the prosecution of the war as a common cause, and who would not have coincided with cheerfulness in every exertion for its success. He considered it, however, ridiculous to assert, that any scarcity of corn can exist in this country to make the nation hesitate as to the prosecution of a great national object. Indeed, in the present case, he was convinced that there was plenty of corn in the country to supply its inhabitants till next harvest.

Mr. *Tierney* said:—It has been observed, that gentlemen have committed themselves, by voting for the prosecution of the war, to vote for the supplies necessary to carry it on: but surely a change of circumstances may produce a change of opinion, and gentlemen who voted for prosecuting the war, while they were confidently told that the differences between the two imperial courts were at an end, may now think that a change has taken place sufficient to authorize their change of opinion, when they hear what amounts to an official avowal of the defection of the emperor of Russia. I know it will be said, that that power has not deserted from the object of the war; that her troops are only to be withdrawn from active operation on the continent of Europe; and that she still retains all her desire of promoting the real object of the war. But did this power ever furnish a man without being paid for him? Or will the emperor of Russia now co-operate with us, except on the old terms, that we shall pay his troops, feed them, clothe them, and send them home again, when we have done with them, each with a bounty money in his pocket, under the name of two months additional pay? But let us enquire how far there can be any real co-operation between us and the emperor of Germany. His object, which he has avowed to all Europe, is totally distinct from any view to the restoration of the Bourbons and of the French monarchy. Has he not, by his whole conduct, proved that it is his only object to increase his power, to make territorial acquisitions, and to recover the countries which he has lost? Had the right hon. gentleman told the House this day, that the emperor of Germany had got over his difficulties, and had now avowed a common cause with this country and Russia, there would have been some plausibility, that the object for which a subsidy would be granted might be attained. But the case is widely different: we are asked to subsidize a power which is at war indeed against the same nation with whom we are at war, but who is at war for a very different object. I believe the object of ministers is the restoration of monarchy in France, notwithstanding the *ifs* and *buts*, and the diplomatic special pleading, which they have always introduced when this subject is brought under consideration. For the promotion of this object, I never will consent to vote one shilling of the public money. I may wish the restoration of some better order in France, but the circumstances of this country may be such that I cannot be authorized to vote one farthing to promote it. An hon. gentleman has been

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blamed for introducing the scarcity of corn: but, if there is one subject more connected than another with this discussion, it is this. It surely is not improper to inquire whether it is expedient to send money from this country to supply the wants of others, while we have so great a necessity to turn all our means to the supply of our own. The war has now continued seven years. During the greater part of that time it has been defended on the principles that it was "just and necessary," and 200 millions have been expended in defence of these words. Of late, however, we have heard nothing of the justice and necessity of the war, and the words just and necessary have died a natural death. Indeed, now the war can neither be said to be just nor necessary. It is not just, because its object is to restore monarchy in France: it is not necessary, because we have refused to negotiate when an opportunity was in our power. The principle of the present proposition now demands from me a few words of observation. This principle is shortly this: you have voted for the continuance and prosecution of the war, and if you act consistently, you will vote for this subsidy of 500,000*l.* being granted. But it will not end here: having once voted this sum, you will be asked to vote much larger subsidies. I cannot believe that any of this 500,000*l.* is intended for the emperor. He will not conform to the views of the right hon. gentleman, and would not, I dare say, accept a subsidy on the principle of conforming to them. But is not the war as much the business of the emperor of Germany, and of the states of the empire, as of this country? I shall be told, perhaps, that they have abundance of zeal, but little money. This was the statement at the beginning of the war; and when subsidies were then granted by this country, similar arguments were used. Then the emperor got four or five millions. But at a subsequent period, when he got no supplies from this country, did it appear that his resources were smaller, or his exertions less energetic? How, then, can it now be argued, that without a subsidy from us he will be unable to call the men into the field? If ministers had negotiated sincerely, when overtures were made to them, it is possible, that we might have had a secure, an honourable, and a lasting peace; and if this chance has been wantonly renounced, then I am not warranted in voting, that the money or the blood of this country should be wasted in a contest to which I see no end, and for a purpose totally undefined. Is the destruction of Jacobin principles the object which ministers have in view? Let us suppose that this is the object; do they intend to fight against it till they extinguish its last embers? What is this Jacobin spirit? Let them define it, that we may know against what we fight. But it is something indescribable; a phantom which is only now known by the designation which has been given it. They must know that Jacobinism is now in France much diminished in its power and influence. The late events which have taken place in that country have almost annihilated it, or have at least deprived it of all that ever rendered it attractive. The principles of Jacobinism so much deprecated always tended to some species of liberty—to vesting the power in the hands of the people. This liberty is now totally abolished, and with it Jacobinism must expire. But if the same measures are pursued which gave it birth and energy, it may revive. But in truth I do not think that this can be the real object of the war. This object must either be something hidden in the minds of ministers, which they are afraid to publish, or something which they themselves have not ascertained. It may be the restoration of the house of Bourbon; but I would wish the right hon. gentleman in one sentence to state what this object is. I am persuaded he cannot; and that he calls us to prosecute a war, and to lavish our treasure and blood in its support, when no one plain satisfactory and intelligible reason can be given for its continuance.

Mr. *Pitt* said:—The hon. gentleman defies me to state, in one sentence, what is the object of the war. In one word, I tell him that it is security;—security against a danger, the greatest that ever threatened the world—security against a danger which never existed in any past period of society. This country alone, of all the nations of Europe, presented barriers the best fitted to resist its progress. We alone recognized the necessity of open war, as well with the principles, as the practice of the French revolution. We saw that it was to be resisted no less by arms abroad, than by precaution at home; that we were to look for protection no less to the courage of our forces than to the wisdom of our councils; no less to

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military effort than to legislative enactment. At the moment when those, who now admit the dangers of Jacobinism while they contend that it is extinct, used to palliate this atrocity, this House wisely saw that it was necessary to erect a double safeguard against a danger that wrought no less by undisguised hostility than by secret machination. But how long is it since the hon. gentleman and his friends have discovered that the dangers of Jacobinism have ceased to exist? How long is it since they have found that the cause of the French revolution is not the cause of liberty? How or where did the hon. gentleman discover that the Jacobinism of Robespierre, of Barrère, of the triumvirate, of the five directors, has all disappeared, because it has all been centered in one man who was reared and nursed in its bosom, whose celebrity was gained under its auspices, who was at once *the child and the champion* of all its atrocities? Our security in negotiation is to be this Buonaparté, who is now the sole organ of all that was formerly dangerous and pestiferous in the revolution. Jacobinism is allowed formerly to have existed, because the power was divided. Now it is single, and it no longer lives. This discovery is new, and I know not how it has been made. But the hon. gentleman asks, Whether the war is to be carried on till Jacobinism is extinguished, if he means that war is to be carried on until Jacobinish has either lost its sting, or is abridged in its power to do evil. I say that this is the object of our exertions. I do not say that we must wage war until the principle of Jacobinism is extinguished in the mind of every individual; were that the object of the contest, I am afraid it would not terminate but with the present generation. I am afraid that a mind once tainted with that infection, never recovers its healthful state. I am afraid that no purification is sufficient to eradicate the poison of that foul distemper. Even those, we see, who so loudly tell us that the danger of Jacobinism is past, are endeavouring to disarm us of the means of carrying on the war against its remnant, by those arts which they employed to bend us down before its meridian splendor. They tell us again, that by resisting that pestilent mischief, we are promoting distress, that we are despising humanity. They tell us that we have spent 200 millions for a phrase—for the words "just and necessary." If this country has spent 200 millions, they have been spent to preserve the sources of its prosperity, its happiness, its glory, its freedom. Yes, Sir, we have spent that sum; and I trust we are ready, as I am sure we are able to spend 200 millions more for purposes so important. I trust this country is ready to exert its efforts to avail ourselves of the assistance of our allies to obtain real security, and to attain solid peace. It is true, that in this contest different opinions may exist as to the means by which the danger is to be resisted. The emperor of Russia may approve of one course, the emperor of Germany another. But is it not strange that the hon. gentleman should be so displeased that we are desirous of the co-operation of the emperor of Germany, who has not gone so far in his declarations on the subject of the war as the emperor of Russia? Is it a ground of objection with the hon. gentleman, that we should avail ourselves of the assistance of those who do not declare themselves in favour of that object which he professes himself particularly to disapprove? Without changing our own objects, may we not avail ourselves of the aid of other powers, though the motives of the co-operation may not be those which dictate our own exertions? Admitting that the emperor of Germany has no other view but to regain possession of the Netherlands, to drive the enemy back to the Rhine, to recover the fortresses which he was forced to abandon, are these objects which have no connexion with British safety? Austria must dread the hostility of French principles; she must distrust the security of republican peace. Why, then, should we be unwilling to employ the co-operation of Austrian arms for objects in which we ourselves are so nearly concerned?—The hon. gentleman said, that the war could not be just, because it was carried on for the restoration of the house of Bourbon; and that it could not be necessary, because we had refused to negotiate for peace when an opportunity was offered us. As to the first proposition, he has assumed the foundation of the argument, and has left no ground for controverting it, or for explanation, because he says that any attempt at explanation upon this subject is the mere ambiguous language of *ifs* and *buts*, and of special pleading. Now, Sir, I never had much liking to special pleading; and if ever I had any, it is by this time almost entirely gone. He has,

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besides, so abridged me of the use of particles, that though I am not particularly attached to the sound of an *if* or a *but*, I would be much obliged to him if he would give me some others to supply their places. Is this, however, a light matter, that it should be treated in so light a manner? The restoration of the French monarchy, I consider as a most desirable object, because I think that it would afford the best security to this country and to Europe. *But* this object may not be attainable; and if it be not attainable we must be satisfied with the best security we can find independent of it. Peace is most desirable to this country; *but* negotiation may be attended with greater evils than could be counterbalanced by any benefits which would result from it. And *if* this be found to be the case; *if* it afford no prospect of security; *if* it threaten all the evils which we have been struggling to avert; *if* the prosecution of the war afford the prospect of attaining complete security: and *if* it may be prosecuted with increasing commerce, with increasing means, and with increasing prosperity, except what may result from the visitations of the seasons; then, I say, that it is prudent in us not to negotiate at the present moment. These are my *buts* and my *ifs*. This is my plea, and on no other do I wish to be tried, by God and my country.—The hon. gentleman says, that we reduce our own means in the same proportion that we exhaust those of the enemy. Is this, indeed, the conclusion which we must draw from a survey of the respective situations of France and England, since the negotiation at Paris, and particularly those at Lisle? Does the hon. gentleman really think, that the means of this country have been exhausted in the same proportion with those of the enemy? Does he think that the expense of a new campaign will produce that effect? On these grounds of comparison the question is to be decided, and not upon those topics which are adduced to create a prejudice against the war, and those insidious representations employed to render it unpopular. It is, indeed, to become the allies of Jacobinism, to connect, as some affect to do, the present scarcity with the subject of the war. It is, indeed, to resort to its most destructive weapons, thus to appeal to the feelings of the multitude and call upon them to decide, on such a ground, upon a question, of which, in their coolest state, they are, perhaps, unqualified to judge. When we see such arts employed, I think it pretty strong proof that Jacobinism is not extinct.—I am no enemy to peace: but I think that the danger of patching up a peace without any probable ground of its permanency, is greater than that of carrying on a war. With respect to the negotiation at Lisle, I believed at the moment, that the prosecution of the war was fraught with more danger to the country than the establishment of peace, if peace could have been concluded on such terms as were then proposed to the enemy. It was the result of a comparison between the farther prosecution of the war, and the then existing state of the country; a state different from that in which, I am happy to say, it finds itself at this moment. I am free to say, that the prevalence of Jacobinical principles in France does not at present allow me to hope for a secure peace. As I declared upon a former occasion, without that attempt to obtain peace, we could not have made those subsequent exertions which have proved so successful. But because of our present increased means for carrying on the war, I ask the hon. gentleman, is it fair to argue that I was insincere in labouring for peace at a time, when the circumstances of the country dictated the expedience of attempting it?—We are told, however, that our policy ought to be changed, as the Russians are no longer to co-operate with Austria. But may not the Russians be employed with advantage in the common cause, though they no longer act immediately in conjunction with the Austrians? If, however, the Russians are not to assist the cause by their efforts upon the continental frontier of France, does it not become the policy of England to employ every means to supply the loss which their departure will occasion? The measure in question aims at that object? It is for the House, then, to decide whether, in supporting this measure, we have judged on good grounds. If any man thinks he sees the means of bringing the contest to an earlier termination than by vigorous efforts and military operations, he is justified in opposing the measures which are necessary to carry it on with energy. Those who consider the war to be expedient, cannot, with consistency, refuse their assent to measures calculated to bring it to a successful issue. Even those who may disapprove of the contest, which they cannot prevent by

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their votes, cannot honestly pursue that conduct which tends only to render its termination favourable to the enemy. God forbid I should question the freedom of thought, or the liberty of speech, but I cannot see how gentlemen can justify a language and a conduct which can have no tendency but to disarm our exertions, and to defeat our hopes in the prosecution of the contest. They ought to limit themselves to those arguments which could influence the House against the war altogether; not dwell upon topics which can tend only to weaken our efforts and betray our cause. Above all, nothing can be more unfair in reasoning, than to ally the present scarcity with the war, or to insinuate that its prosecution will interfere with those supplies which we may require.

Mr. *Wilberforce* said, he would confine himself to the main question, which was, being at war, whether we should conduct it with vigour, or not? and whether that vigorous resistance could not be more effectually made by foreign troops, subsidized by this country, than by British troops? He was surprised how any gentleman who had voted for the war should take exception to this mode. Did his right hon. friend at any time deny that the pressure of the war would be severe? Certainly not. It was a misrepresentation to state that the war was carried on for the restoration of the Bourbons. The war was carried on for just and weighty considerations. The government of France was such as no man could calculate on with any degree of certainty. The most ambitious monarch that ever filled a throne afforded infinitely more grounds for security than its present usurper. Buonaparté was connected with the Jacobins, who hitherto distracted France; they influenced of course its councils, and rendered all intercourse extremely dangerous. The old system of Jacobinism prevailed; and who could tell but, at the very time of negotiation, a powerful force might be brought against this country? This was a solid objection to entering on a premature negotiation. We ought not, then, to be told, that the object of the war was to place the Bourbons on the throne. The opposition made to the vote of this night, was an opposition made to the principle of the war, on purpose to impede the powers of administration, and force them into a disadvantageous negotiation. When there was any appearance of security in the councils of France, then, and not till then, should he be ready to treat for peace.

Mr. *Sheridan* said:—The right hon. the chancellor of the exchequer has spoken with great eloquence, I may say irritation; but never was eloquence so misapplied. He has shown his dexterity in driving the subject from its basis; he guides, urges, and inflames the passions of his hearers on Jacobinical principles; but he does not show how they bear on the present question. He has not dared to say that, so far as respects the restoration of the Bourbons, we have suffered by the defection of Russia. What that power may still do with regard to La Vendée, or reconciling the people of Ireland to the union, I do not inquire; but with regard to the great object, the restoration of monarchy in France, we are *minus* the emperor of Russia; that power may be considered as extinct. Is it then to be endured, that the minister shall ask for a subsidy under such circumstances? If Germany possessed these wonderful forces before, why were they not called into action; and if not, why are we to subsidize the *posse comitatus*, the rabble of Germany? But who is the person that applies for this subsidy? It is the emperor of Germany. Is there any thing in his conduct or character to incline us to listen to him? I think not; and for two reasons: first, he applied once on a false pretence; and, secondly, he failed in performing his stipulated engagement. Now, if to this we add "experience and the evidence of facts," when he dared, though bound to this country, to break faith with her, and make a separate peace, does it not furnish a rational cause for declining to grant a subsidy to such a power?—The minister is offended at our connecting the present scarcity with the question of war. Now, I see no more objection to state the pressure in this particular from the continuance of the war, than there would be to advance the increase of the public debt, the situation of the finances, or any other of those reasons so often assigned, without its having been ever objected that they were of an improper kind. What has my hon. friend said? We see an opulent commercial prosperity; but look over the country, and we behold barracks and broth-houses, the cause and its effect, the poverty and distress of the country. That the war is unnecessary, as being useless, is self-evident. But, say they, we do not

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object to peace, but we have a jealousy of concluding one, except with the House of Bourbon; in a peace concluded with it we should have confidence, but we have none in the present government of France. I say, were that event arrived, and the House of Bourbon seated on the throne, the minister ought to be impeached who would disband a single soldier; and that it would be equally criminal to make peace under a new king as under a republican government, upless her heart and mind were friendly to it. France, as a republic, may be a bad neighbour; but than monarchical France a more foul and treacherous neighbour never was. Is it, then, sufficient to say, let monarchy be restored, and let peace be given to all Europe?—What security have we, that a change of principles will take place in the restored monarch? But if this security is effected by maiming France, would the people of France submit to it? With regard to the practicability of the course to be pursued, the right hon. gentleman says, he is looking forward to a time when there shall be no dread of Jacobin principles. I ask whether he does not think, from the fraud, oppression, tyranny, and cruelty, with which the conduct of France has marked them, that they are not now nearly dead, extinct, and detested? But who are the Jacobins? Is there a man in this country who has at any time opposed ministers, who has resisted the waste of public money and the prostitution of honours, that has not been branded with the name? The Whig club are Jacobins. Of this there can be no doubt, for a right hon. gentleman (Mr. Windham) on that account struck his name off the list. The Friends of the People are Jacobins. I am one of the Friends of the People, and consequently am a Jacobin. The right hon. gentleman pledged himself never to treat with Jacobin France. "Toto certatum est corpore regni." Now, he did treat with France at Lisle and at Paris; but perhaps there were not Jacobins in France at either of these times. You then, the Friends of the People, are the Jacobins. I do think Jacobin principles never existed much in this country; and even admitting they had, they have been found so hostile to true liberty, that in proportion as we love it, we must detest these principles. But more; I do not think they even exist in France: they have stung themselves to death, and died by their own poison. But the right hon. gentleman, arguing from experience of human nature, tells us, that Jacobin principles are such, that the mind that is once infected with them, no quarantine can cleanse. Now, if this be the case, and that there are, according to Mr. Burke's statement, 80,000 incorrigible Jacobins in England, we are in a melancholy situation; the right hon. gentleman must continue the war while the present generation remains, and consequently we cannot for that period expect those rights to be restored to us, to the suspension and restrictions of which the right hon. gentleman attributes the suppression of these principles. A pretty consolation this, truly! Now I contend that they do not exist in France to the same extent as before, or nearly. If this, then, be the case, what danger can we apprehend? But if this then be true, and that Buonaparté, the child and champion of Jacobin principles, as he is called, be resolved to uphold them, upon what ground does the right hon. gentleman presume to hope for the restoration of the house of Bourbon? So far I have argued on the probability of the object; but the right hon. gentleman goes on, and says, there is no wish to restore monarchy without the consent of the people. Now, if this be the case, is it not better to leave the people to themselves; for if armies are to interfere, how can we ascertain that it is a legitimate government established with the pure consent of the people? As to Buonaparté, whose character has been represented as marked with fraud and insincerity, has he not made treaties with the Emperor, and observed them? Is it not his interest to make peace with us? And can you suppose, that if peace were made, he has not power to make it be observed by the people of France? And are not the people of France aware that an infraction of that peace would bring with it a new order of things, and a renewal of those calamities from which they have escaped? But, Sir, on the character of Buonaparté I have better evidence than the intercepted letters. I appeal to Carnot, whether the instructions given with respect to the conduct to be observed to the emperor, were not moderate, open, and magnanimous?—[Here Mr. Sheridan read an extract from Carnot's pamphlet, in support of his assertion].—With regard to the late note, in answer to his proposal to negotiate, it is foolish, insulting and undignified. It is evidence to me, that

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the hon. gentlemen themselves do not believe his character to be such as they describe it; for, if they did, they must know their language would irritate such a mind; the passions will mix themselves with reason in the conduct of men, and they cannot say that they will not yet be obliged to treat with Buonaparté. I am warranted in saying this; for I do believe in my heart, that since the defection of Russia, ministers have been repenting of their answer. I say so, because I do not consider them so obstinate and headstrong as to persevere with as much ardour for the restoration of monarchy as when they were pledged with Russia. There was not a nation in Europe which ministers have not endeavoured to draw into the war. On what was such conduct founded, but on Jacobinical principles? Indeed, ministers, by negotiating at one time with a Jacobinical government in France, plainly proved they were not so hostile to its principles as they wish to appear. Prussia and Austria, as well as this country, have acted also on Jacobinical principles. The conduct of this country towards Ireland has been perfectly Jacobinical. How, then, can we define these principles, when persons who would disavow them fall by some fatality into an unavoidable acknowledgment of them? The objections that have been raised to peace have been entirely Jacobinical. If we seek for peace, it must be done in the spirit of peace. We are not to make it a question, who was the first aggressor, throw the blame that may attach to us on our enemy. France, in the beginning of the revolution, had conceived many romantic notions; she was to put an end to war, and produce, by a pure form of government, a perfectibility of mind which before had never been realized. The monarchs of Europe, seeing the prevalence of these new principles, trembled for their thrones. France, also, perceiving their hostility to her projects, supposed she could not be a republic without the overthrow of thrones. Such has been the regular progress of cause and effect; but who was the first aggressor, with whom the jealousy first arose, need not now be a matter of discussion. Both the republic, and the monarchs who opposed her, acted on the same principles: the latter said they must exterminate Jacobins, and the former that they must destroy monarchs. From this source have all the calamities of Europe flowed; and it is now a waste of time and argument to enquire farther into the subject.—Now, Sir, let us come to matter of fact. Has not France renounced and reprobated those Jacobin principles, which created her so many enemies? Are not all her violent invectives against regular governments come into disesteem? Has not the Abbé Sieyes, who wrote in favour of monarchy—has not Buonaparté—condemned the Jacobinical excesses of the Revolution,—the very men who have had so large a share in the formation of the present government? But I maintain that Buonaparté himself is also a friend to peace. There is in his correspondence with the ministers of this country a total renunciation of Jacobinical principles. In the dread, therefore, of these, I can see no argument for the continuance of war. A man who is surprised at the revolution of sentiment in individuals or nations shows but little experience. Such instances occur every day. Neither would a wise man always attach to principles the most serious consequences. Left to themselves, the absurd and dangerous would soon disappear; and wisdom establish herself only the more secure on their ruins. I am a friend to peace at this time, because I think Buonaparté would be as good a friend and neighbour to this country as ever were any of the Bourbons. I think also that there can be no time when we can hope to have better terms. If the king of Prussia should join France, such an alliance would greatly change the state of things; and from her long and honourable neutrality (in spite of the entreaties of this country), an event of that kind is by no means unlikely to happen. It must be considered also, that the first consul must feel no little portion of resentment towards this country, arising from the indignity with which his overtures of negotiation have been treated; it is not improbable that, to satisfy his revenge, he would make large sacrifices to the House of Austria, that he might contend more successfully against this country. Such are my fears and opinions; but I am unhappily in the habit of being numbered with the minority, and therefore their consequences are considerably diminished. But there have been occasions when the sentiments of the minority of this House have been those of the people at large: one, for instance, when a war was prevented with Russia concerning Oczakow. The minority told

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the minister, that the sentiments of the country were contrary to those of the majority: the fact justified them in the assertion, and the dispute was abandoned. In 1797, the opinions of the minority on peace were those of the people, and I believe the same coincidence exists now upon the same subject.

Mr. *Windham* said:—Sir; in rising to deliver my sentiments on the question before us, I cannot avoid remarking, that the opinions of the House, and those opinions of the gentlemen opposite, have long been in direct opposition. The House wishes that an end may be put to the calamities which have afflicted Europe, arising from revolutionary principles. Gentlemen opposite seem to wish that those principles, which are called the rights of man, may be invigorated and flourish. The House wishes either the restoration of monarchy to France, or some government not tinctured with revolutionary principles. Gentlemen on the other side wish for a republic, such as we now see exist. The House wishes for a government in France that may be a pledge to this country of a safe and honourable peace. Gentlemen, in conformity to their principles, wish the present coalition of powers may be broken, or that their united endeavours may not succeed. They have pleaded the necessity for a negotiation, without considering that it affords very little prospect of leading to peace; while at the same time we know that it would have the certain effect of countenancing and consolidating the power of Buonaparté: it would also produce jealousy among the coalesced powers, and might ultimately tend to break the existing confederacy. Seeing, then, all those immediate dangers to which the coalition is exposed by a negotiation, it requires but little sagacity to conclude for what reason it was at first set on foot; it was an instrument to answer the political purposes of Buonaparté. If a man were to ask what would open an oyster? he would answer a knife of a certain thickness and dimensions: so, if a man were to ask what would break up a coalition? he would answer a negotiation; it is the apple of discord, meant to disunite only, and not to produce pacification. But the object of this country should be to counteract the schemes of our enemy, and this can only be done by guarding, with the most scrupulous care, against every thing which may weaken the great military confederacy now happily renewed against France. Two years and a half ago, when Buonaparté was at the gates of Vienna, what was the conduct of gentlemen opposite? When France appeared to be in her exultation, did they wish to depress her? Their conduct was quite the reverse—they opposed the giving of supplies, and were willing to leave France to turn all her force against Austria. The language of gentlemen is, if you continue the war, we will try to cripple you in all your efforts, and to render them ineffectual. If gentlemen acted impartially and fairly, they would examine whether there was not some important end to be answered worth all the trouble and expense which ministers would wish to bestow on its attainment. If such an end existed, it would then be the height of absurdity to refuse the means of accomplishing it. But on this subject we have heard very little said.—As for the reasons alleged for not granting the supply required, I am glad to observe that they seem to make very little impression on the House. If gentlemen can show that the money is not likely to produce an effect adequate to the expenditure, or that it can be laid out in some other way more to the advantage of this country, ministers will be much oliged to them. But gentlemen opposite do not appear to be decided in their plans;—sometimes they would put an entire stop to the war—and sometimes they would only obstruct it. Some would go great lengths to carry on the war, but object to the extensive lengths to which others are led, and therefore endeavour to paralyse the efforts which they want the spirit to approve. Another contradiction is seen also. They are attached to the republic of France while a republic exists, and to individual despotism when fresh circumstances have created that change. Can feelings of the rights of man approve of such revolutions? That the House in general should differ from them, can be a matter of no surprise.—Gentlemen accuse ministers of having no determinate object in the war. Sometimes they say it is the restoration of monarchy: sometimes the surrender of Belgium has been a *sine qua non* of peace; but the explanation of the grounds of the war, and its continuance, have been so often repeated, that it is folly to dwell any longer upon them; it must be intelligible to all mankind. If we cannot gain

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all we wish by the war, we must obtain all we can. Where the best thing is unattainable, the second best must be had. From the beginning to the present period of the war, there has been no variation in the grounds of its continuance. Since I have been connected with the ministry, by no expression of mine could it be supposed that I in the least differed from them. The endeavours, therefore, that gentlemen have made to fix on my conduct the character of change and indecision, are altogether unjust. I am not ashamed of my sentiments, and have always avowed them openly; this has sometimes procured me the praise of candour; and at others, the slur of indiscretion; but I am as little inclined to take the praise, as to admit the slur.—There is one question which gentlemen have asked that deserves a definitive answer—"Will you," they say, "fight for the restoration of that monarchy in France, which was always hostile to this country, and has been the occasion of our wars and debt?" This, Sir, is a matter of calculation. The monarchy of France existed 800 years; and if we consider the evils it occasioned us in that time, *pondere non numero*, we shall find them far inferior to those accumulated upon us by the unprovoked aggressions, the plots, and the arts of France, in the short course of her 8 years revolution. What is found most execrable in the history of the worst times, has been the every-day practice of France. Leaving the notion for a moment, of treating with that country as it now exists, let us suppose a Bourbon on the throne; might not better terms of peace be expected from him than from the present chief consul? Would not peace with him be more permanent? The very condition in which a prince just reinstated in his throne would feel himself, would be a security for the limitation of his views, and the permanency of his engagements; neither, with a disposition to be hostile, could he act with the same force as a republic. For some time also he must, in a great measure, be dependant for security on neighbouring nations. In course of years, however, this same monarchy, I own, might degenerate in principle as it increased in power, and be even as hostile to us as the previous government. It would, however, possess the character of stability, and capacity to respect treaties, while the present government of France carries in its bosom the seeds of its own dissolution, and of disturbing other states.—Gentlemen contend that the character of Buonaparté should not come into consideration. They deprecate any discussion of this kind, and think it fraught with the worst of consequences. Time and occasion, Sir, do not invite me to say much on this subject; I will only observe, that what has been said of Buonaparté did not arise from any peevish satisfaction in weighing his character in the disadvantageous scale, but from the real necessity of the case. Before we treat with any one, we must consider their character and conduct; nothing could be more reasonable; how else shall we be able to rely on his sincerity? Buonaparté has been held out as a hero: this, one would suppose, was no recommendation in the eyes of those who are always declaiming against kings and conquerors, and war and bloodshed. Yet even this hero, armed with the power of a king, can be contemplated without fear, and even with pleasure; while kings in general are branded with being lovers of war and murderers of mankind. Such are the prejudices that gentlemen are willing to entertain, because two thousand years ago a king and a conqueror were synonymous terms; yet the union of these characters in Buonaparté becomes only a venal failing, and he is still to be endured; as a king he is no longer despotic; as a conqueror, it seems, he is not the plunderer of mankind. Tried in a court of chivalry, indeed, his actions might dazzle; but they would not even there bear a scrutiny.—Let us now come to the sincerity of Buonaparté in wishing to make a general peace. His love of peace will be seen in that with Austria, which was made on his part chiefly with a view of carrying war into another quarter of the world. He was in hopes, by having the command of the army of England, of subjugating this country to the authority of France. In the intercepted letters from Egypt also we have several specimens of his sincerity. Yet, for the sake of suffering humanity, we are called upon to make peace with this man. Peace at all events, without considering what kind, is the cry. Just like the man who turned his dirty shirt, and exclaimed: "Oh the comforts of clean linen!" It has been often asked, what is Jacobinism? I say, we know it but by its effects; it breaks up the institutions of every country where it takes root; its explosions are like those of a volcano, sudden and destructive, and

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it has almost brought ruin on Europe. At the same time, I own, there is some difficulty in defining it: it can easily transfer its regard from one government to another; at one time universal representation is the true art of governing in its estimation, and at another it is quite overlooked and forgotten. This puts me in mind of a conversation which I had lately with a friend at Norwich, whom I knew to be tainted. "Brissot (said he) was a fine fellow!" "If he was so (said I), what was he who cut off Brissot's head?" "He was a fine fellow too," answered this weak person. Just so with some gentlemen in this House. In the French revolution, the last murderer is always the hero, and his sentiments and conduct the most estimable for a time; for this reason it is that there is such difficulty in describing Jacobinism: it is a kind of quality that may as well be presented to the mind as chaos itself; it is the very negative of all order. A Jacobin government is a revolutionary government; it is founded on the ruin of every thing permanent and dear to man: it robs the owner of his property to give it to the worthless, and despoils the people of their dearest rights and privileges. We are not to suppose that the danger of Jacobinism is over because it lies dormant, or because liberty is destroyed. If the latter circumstance could have precluded danger, all attachment for Jacobinism must have ceased from the beginning; for that and liberty have never been found to exist one moment together. Yet there are even now persons in this country who wish well to the government at present in France, and who would feel its establishment as the triumph of their sentiments and opinions. Such are the persons who justify the rights of man on every occasion. The progress of these principles is by them deemed no evil, but meets with their warmest support. Those that wish for peace with Buonaparté, wish it with more than natural ardour, and blame, therefore, with proportionate intemperance, every measure adopted with a contrary view; and this arises solely from their regard for the present upstart French monarchy. The interest of this country is not to implicate itself with the French government, for by so doing every proceeding which has disgraced France would meet with our tacit justification; and men who think it would be a great calamity to see the rightful sovereign of France resume his throne and authority, and the owners their estates, would not long scruple, if opportunity offered, to render the same resumption necessary in this country.—The temporary scarcity of provisions is no reason for not prosecuting the war, though it has been represented as almost an invincible objection. If it is of such weight we ought to make peace at any rate. But I object altogether to topics of this kind, on the ground that they are Jacobinical; it is pressing into the service of the question things that do not belong to it. The question of war and scarcity must stand on separate grounds. By exciting among the people discontent on account of the scarcity, important proceedings of administration may be impeded, so as even to force ministers to abandon measures whereon depend the welfare and salvation of the country. On account, therefore, of the mischiefs which are liable to arise from thus mixing topics unconnected in their nature, the practice fully deserves to be branded with the name of Jacobinism, the great characteristic of which is, to take advantage of the discontents of mankind, and turn them to its own purposes.

The Committee divided: Ayes, 162; Noes, 19.

Mr. Abbot's Motion for a Committee on the State of the Public Records.] Feb. 18. Mr. *Abbot* rose to call the attention of the House to the state of the public records of the kingdom. Whoever had reflected upon the importance of preserving the public records and archives in any country which enjoyed the blessings of a settled constitution and government, and looked to the condition of our public records in this country, with a view to their practical utility in matters of legislation, state, or judicature, would certainly find them, in some of the principal repositories, preserved with sufficient order and regularity, and in some few, with a method and care which are exemplary; but in numberless instances, and in many of the most important departments, they were wholly unarranged, undescribed, and unascertained; some of them exposed to erasure, alteration, and embezzlement, by interested parties, and others lodged in places where they are daily rotting by damp, or incurring the continual risk of destruction by fire.—That this state of things had come to pass, was not owing to any intentional disregard of this subject, on the part of the crown, or parlia-

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ment; but to a variety of events, all of which had contributed, in different ways, to produce this result. The public attention had been directed to this object, from early times. In some of the very first petitions upon the rolls of parliament, the public records of the kingdom are emphatically styled the people's evidences, and it is ordained that they shall be made accessible to all the king's subjects. At some periods the sovereign alone, at others the houses of parliament separately, and at others the king and parliament conjointly, had interposed to make special provisions and regulations for their due preservation and arrangement. But, unfortunately, almost all the provisions established by the vigilance of successive reigns were broken down by the civil wars of the last century, and no effectual measures were adopted to retrieve the mischiefs produced by those times of confusion until the reign of queen Anne. At that period lord Halifax, in conjunction with the then speaker, Mr. Harley (afterwards lord Oxford), projected and carried into effect the design of collecting that magnificent compilation of State papers and records which the public now possess under the name of Rhymer's Fœdera. But as that great national work chiefly related to the foreign transactions of this country, lord Halifax afterwards, with the zealous co-operation of lord Somers, proposed to the House of Lords to investigate the state of our domestic records, as connected with our internal laws and government. That inquiry was prosecuted without intermission, and with many salutary consequences, through the reigns of queen Anne and George 1st down to the commencement of the reign of his late majesty;—at which time this House was induced, after the fire, which happened to the Cottonian library, to set on foot another inquiry by its own authority, still more extensive and effectual; and the very valuable report made at the conclusion of that proceeding, together with an earnest and unanimous address of the House of Commons in support of the measures which it recommended, was laid at the foot of the throne.—Since that transaction, a period had elapsed of nearly seventy years, during which some of the measures recommended by that report had been adopted very effectually, although others of them had not been fully executed. And not only the very lapse of time had progressively superadded a large accumulation of materials in every department to which that investigation extended, but many other repositories of great national importance, such as the courts maritime and ecclesiastical, had not fallen within the scope of the former inquiries, nor had they extended to Scotland. And besides that the Cathedral and University libraries were not then explored, the public had since acquired other collections equal in value to any of those already enumerated, such as the Royal, the Harleian, and the Sloanian, which now constitute the British Museum. Thus, the difficulties of introducing method and arrangement had multiplied with the increase of materials: in addition to which, a new source of embarrassment had been created by the change which took place during the same interval of time in the language and written character of judicial proceedings; a change which, without questioning its utility in other respects, had altered the mode of education of those persons whose professional habits should have made them most conversant with these matters; so that few, very few persons possessing even by tradition the technical knowledge belonging to these subjects are now to be met with.—It was obvious that the practical evils resulting from this train of circumstances must be very considerable. And some of them were so striking and singular, and of such opposite sorts, that the statement of them would prove the urgency of some parliamentary interposition. Within the walls of the House of Commons itself, there were loads of records, noticed in the reports of parliament nearly a century ago, and of which no man knew the contents, though they were supposed to belong to the courts of common law; but nevertheless they still remain in their present situation, for want of some proper authority to remove them, or to receive them elsewhere. In the courts of common law themselves, those rolls which are called the Docquets of Judgments, and materially concern the titles to landed property, so far as they belong to the court of King's-bench, are exposed to the daily risk of being burnt; and those of the Common-pleas, besides suffering an equal risk of fire, are actually perishing by damp. In the Exchequer of equity, such is the defect of establishment, that any of the ancient decrees relating to tithes, boundaries, customs, and other rights, of the most valuable nature, may be falsified, or removed by any per-

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son whatever, almost without check or restraint; and there were persons at this time within hearing, who knew that such abuses had been practised. In the office of the lord treasurer's remembrancer the evil was of a different sort; and there, for want of accommodation, the records were utterly inaccessible, so that questions of public moment were now suspended for the want of documents, known to be lodged here, but which could not be produced, or selected, from the general mass of confusion. In the Pipe-office, another branch of the Exchequer, where by law every public accountant ought to have his quietus recorded, it had been represented three years ago to a committee of this House (the finance committee) that no person, however deeply interested in the affairs of any public accountant, either as principal or surety, could obtain a certificate of the state of his final balance or discharge. An evil of a still different sort occurred in the instance of special commissions for the trials of treasons; and however strange it might appear, it was strictly true, that the proceedings under the commission executed in the north after the rebellion in 1745, and those in London in 1794, and at Maidstone in 1798, remained now in the unauthenticated custody of private persons,—without any blame whatever being imputable to them—but for want of proper process to remove them to their proper place of deposit. And, as to the affairs of Scotland or Ireland, so broken and disjoined were all the documents relating to those countries, that there was no place in which any man might not search for them with some expectation of success, and no place where he could be certain that his search would be successful.—He next stated, that although this was the real condition of the public records, he was by no means confident that some persons might not be of opinion, that no great harm would ensue if all these parchments and papers were left to perish in their dust, or were fairly disposed of by one general conflagration; and he was disposed to apprehend this the more because it was well known that the levellers in the last century had actually proposed that expedient, and there might be some men now, who not unwisely for the same ends, might hold the same opinions. But this was perfectly clear, that there could be no rational medium whatever, between adopting that summary expedient, or taking the most effectual means for their arrangement and preservation. Many strong reasons of personal interest and public policy must prove this to every man who had either landed property to defend, or who felt a value for the constitution under which he lived. And whatever might be the indifference with which those things were regarded in the abstract, he would ask any land-owner, either in the House or out of it—whether, if his title came to be litigated, he would not resort to those repositories with the greatest anxiety, and think himself most secure if he found it was warranted by some royal grant, some ancient perambulation, or public survey. Corporate franchises, and many of the most valuable rights of the church, had no other solid foundation; and in parliament itself, besides the periodical discussions which arise before committees upon election rights, which are often deeply involved in these researches, —whenever the two Houses unhappily differ, it is by the recorded transactions of their ancestors that their conferences must be guided; for they have no other umpire to which they can resort; and even parliament, in its entire capacity, has at no very distant period, and upon occasions of the most solemn concern, looked to those repositories for the most certain standard of its proceedings, in times and upon questions the most arduous. He trusted, therefore, that it was not too much to assert, in the language of lord Halifax's Report "that it will be a public damage, and dishonour to the kingdom, to suffer such monuments of antiquity to perish."—He then proceeded to state the leading points, to which he proposed that the present enquiry should be directed. In the first place, he proposed to call upon the proper officers of every principal repository in England, who was entrusted with any records or instruments in which the public has a concern, requiring him to state the sorts of instruments in his possession, and the periods of time to which they relate; extending this enquiry also to Scotland, where matters of this nature had been in all times regulated with the most exemplary care; and meaning that the contents of all these returns should be afterwards methodized and digested by competent and experienced persons, to be authorized and employed for the express purpose of furnishing the House with the most correct information in the most convenient form. In the next place,

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he should propose to ascertain the state of the buildings in which the public records are lodged, as to their security and accommodation; with a view to have those public buildings repaired which may require it,—and in some instances possibly to render other buildings public property, which are at present inconveniently holden by private tenure; but in no case to disturb any possession, or change the custody of any records, except perhaps in some very few instances of most evident right, and upon the most cogent reasons of unquestionable utility. And, in the last place, for the purpose of rendering the access to these repositories most complete, to call for an explanation of the state of their catalogues and calendars, and also of their establishments and regulations for conducting searches, with a view on this head to provide more effectually for the security of the records themselves, at the same time that the use of them might be rendered more convenient to his majesty's subjects.—From this course of proceeding, beyond the execution of these particular details, there were also other consequences likely to follow, and which ought not to be wholly unnoticed. The very event of a parliamentary visitation would impress the officers of each department with a stronger sense of their duty, knowing that their conduct, if meritorious, would not be unobserved, and that any culpable negligence might not escape animadversion; and this salutary impression would endure long after the event of this particular enquiry, because the period when a similar visitation might be expected to occur must always be indefinite. Another consequence which might probably follow, would be the discovery of many valuable monuments of the policy of our ancestors, which it might not be unprofitable to keep in view hereafter; and if the survey of this country, contained in the books of Domesday, has been always truly accounted a work of great public importance, it would be gratifying to the House to know that other surveys may be found, which were executed in the reign of Edward 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, (for some of them the honourable member had seen), which would be of infinitely greater value than Domesday itself, if they should be found complete, inasmuch as they come two or three centuries nearer to our own times, and contain more curious and comprehensive views of the civil and ecclesiastical state of this country, at the periods to which they relate.—But there was still one object beyond all these, upon which he could not but entertain a sanguine hope; that every new light thrown upon this subject would convince parliament at last of the necessity and facility of establishing a general registration of all instruments affecting landed property. In Scotland this system has already prevailed for ages, with the happiest consequences to those who belong to that part of the united kingdom; in Ireland the same system has obtained for near a century, with the same beneficial consequences; and in the two most populous districts of England, namely, Middlesex and Yorkshire, where the same plan has been established for the same length of time, though upon a narrower scale, it has been found to add a distinct and specific value to the property which it secures; many recent events have contributed to dissipate the prejudices which once hung upon this question, and it now remains only by transcribing one short and approved law to extend the same benefits throughout the rest of England. This considered merely as an improvement of our juridical system would be one of the greatest which could be devised. But as a measure of state policy, it was demonstrably clear, that whatever establishes security and good faith between man and man in transactions respecting landed property, tends to facilitate the reciprocal exchange and conversion of the landed and monied capital; and the giving to capital an increased activity, will necessarily increase its total amount. Nor was it altogether to be disregarded as offering a new and reasonable source of revenue; for no man would have to pay for recording his title, without receiving at the same time a specific and corresponding benefit, by the additional security given to his possession; and the produce of such a revenue would be continually rising with the multiplied population and increasing prosperity of the country.—He concluded with stating, that although he had dwelt upon these latter topics, because they made part of his general view of the subject, it was not his intention to propose any examination of what might be politic for the House to adopt, in respect of any new institution, or any extension of former systems, but only to ascertain the state of those already established. He therefore moved, "That a Committee be appointed to en-

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quire into the Public Records of this Kingdom, and of such other public instruments, rolls, books, and papers, as they shall think proper; and to report to the House the nature and condition thereof, together with what they shall judge fit to be done for the better arrangement, preservation, and more convenient use of the same."—The Master of the Rolls seconded the motion, and a Select Committee was accordingly appointed.

Debate in the Commons on the Habeas Corpus Suspension Bill.] Feb. 13. The *Attorney General* (Sir John Mitford) rose to move for the renewal of the act to enable his majesty to secure and detain persons suspected of conspiring against his person and government; which act would expire on the 1st of March next. Since the last passing of the bill, the disposition of the country was not changed with regard to the machinations of those persons who were to be the objects of the bill; and therefore if the House thought it a fit and proper measure last year, they must think so now. The country might be in a state of greater safety than it was a year or two ago; but it was impossible to read the report of the committee of that House, published last year, without being convinced that there were persons in this country who would disturb the peace of it, if any opportunity presented itself. The peace of the country had been already preserved by the powers which this act vested in the hands of government. Conceiving it necessary, therefore, to continue the same powers, he would move, "That leave be given to bring in a bill for further continuing, for a time to be limited, the said act."

Mr. *Jones* conceived the loyalty of the country to be so great, as to render the bill unnecessary. He never would place unlimited power in the hands of ministers over the liberties and lives of the whole country. It would be better to repeal the Habeas Corpus act at once.

Mr. *Buxton* believed it was to the suspension of that act that members owed the liberty of sitting there. The war was carried on against Jacobin principles, and as long as they continued in France, so long must it endure.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, that at no time should he be easily persuaded to vote for this bill; and less than ever when the plea was, not the disaffection in this country, but the dangerous principles in another. So then, as long as any other country retained Jacobinical principles, even though France renounced them, so long must Great Britain remain deprived of the Habeas Corpus act! This was the greatest insult that could be offered to the nation. Better give up the Habeas Corpus entirely! Was there any appearance of treason now in the country? And yet though nothing of a seditious nature had passed, this suspension was to be continued. Not one of the imprisoned persons had been brought to trial. And how many had been taken up since April 1799? Only one Irishman and one Swedish baron. He thought it peculiarly unjust, that persons should be kept for years in prison without being brought to trial, because proof sufficient could not be brought against them. The only reason why more people were not taken up was, because ministers were convinced that no conspiracy existed.

Mr. *Windham* said, that the hon. gentleman had always opposed the suspension, and he would not be consistent with himself if he did not oppose it now. But the question was not what the hon. gentleman might do, but what the House should do upon this subject; and in the determination of that, another question arose, which was, whether any such change has taken place since the last suspension, as to require measures different from those which parliament has hitherto pursued, by way of general safety? Now upon that subject he must contend, that we were not warranted in saying there was no symptoms remaining of the mischief which we formerly dreaded, and that therefore the Habeas Corpus act should not now be suspended; but he was very far from being sure, that such manner of reasoning was to be adopted, or that the reverse was not to be in some measure taken up, because the very cessation of the mischief proved, to a certain extent, the efficacy of the remedy, and therefore the non-appearance of the evil, instead of being a reason for taking off the remedy, was a reason for its continuance, otherwise the House must come to this sort of reason; "We will repeal the act, because we have found it to be efficacious." The case was, indeed, open to two ways of reasoning; for he believed that both were in a degree true. He believed that the quiet of the country was partly owing to this act, and he believed also that there was a change in the dispositions of some

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parts of the country. The numbers of the disaffected he took to be altered, because the state of the stock which supported disaffection was higher at some times than at others, like the state of stock in another country; but he had no doubt, that if Buonaparté were to be successful, in reviving, to its utmost height, the pride and confidence of French power, the spirit which accompanied it before would appear again; and he thought it would be quite childish in the House to suffer itself to be misled in this way. He believed indeed that Jacobinism was on the decline, nor did he apprehend the principles of the rights of man to be so popular as they had been; but he hoped the House would not be off its guard; by thinking that all danger was at an end; for many of these things disappeared for the purpose of giving them more effect when they should appear again. Here the disaffected stood upon the badness of their own character, by saying, "We are so degraded that nobody will give us credit, and therefore it is quite unnecessary to make any provision against us." He hoped, however, the House would not act upon any confidence of this kind. The smallness of the number of Jacobins in this country arose, in a great measure, from the discretion of these persons; for they felt that by the act they were subject to punishment, and therefore they were silent. Beside this, it took away the power of those men, whom nothing but the want of power would render harmless. He knew of a man who was put upon his trial, and on which the jury (for proper reasons no doubt) acquitted him; but he would not be so childish as to say, that he was tied down by that decision of the jury (though acquitted rightly and properly, perhaps, from a defect of evidence, accidentally happening, or otherwise) from saying that he might still be of opinion he was really guilty, and he would therefore wish to put such a person in a situation in which it would not be in his power to do any more mischief. Besides, every thing being quiet at this moment, was no proof that there was no plot in existence. What was the case in Ireland? A plot was discovered by information of an accomplice, and other means, which if it had not, within twenty-four hours the capital might have been in ashes and streaming in blood—it was a plot that was discovered at once, as by lemon juice hidden characters are rendered legible. He did not mean to say, that the metropolis of Great Britain had ever been exposed to the same danger; nor that these considerations made up the strongest reasons for the continuance of the suspension; but he did say these were some reasons for it. The number of disaffected persons was not so great as it had been; but he did not believe the disposition of the disaffected to all establishments in the world was altered; he believed it was in full vigour still, and therefore he hoped that this bill would be continued.

Sir *Francis Burdett* said, that ministers seemed to pass this bill, as a matter of course, without assigning the reasons that induced them to have recourse to such a measure. The general reason of Jacobin principles—principles, not even yet defined—furnished them hitherto with pretexts for depriving the subject of one of his most estimable privileges. This reason he was inclined to think, was done away, and he wished to know upon what grounds they were now to proceed. He was at a loss to comprehend what was meant by Jacobin principles being on the decline in this country, unless they meant the principles of liberty. The secretary at war, had asked, Was there nothing to dread from the contagion of French principles, and the mischiefs which they almost every where produce? He in return would ask, Was there nothing to dread from breaking down the barriers of the constitution, erecting of barracks throughout the kingdom, perverting the purposes of the militia, and perpetually passing the suspension of this act, which secured to the subject his freedom? He had not language to express what he felt at the repeated suspension of the Habeas Corpus. If any part of our constitution was preferable to another, it was this act; which when removed, left very little difference between one government and another. Was not two years imprisonment sufficient for those unhappy persons who were in confinement: and did not their detention from justice argue a fear in ministers to bring them to trial? He said their innocence was the cause of their detention, and in proof of that he asked to have them brought to trial. To whom was the power to be given which this bill called for? To those who had already abused it. To those who, upon illegal warrants, upon the warrants of clerks in offices, powers not known to the constitution were passed into the hands of Bow-

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street ruffians, who, under their authority went down to Manchester, and dragged from their own houses, at night, and amidst the cries of their families, the masters of those families, hand-cuffed and loaded with irons, to Clerkenwell prison, where they were lodged, under torture of mind and body. When out of their hands, they applied to the humanity of the gaoler for relief, in consequence of the swellings of their legs, occasioned by the treatment of these savages. What would the father of the chancellor of the exchequer have said on the recital of such oppression? Would he not have said, that the cottage of the peasant was as sacred as the palace of the prince? That, though humbly thatched it was secure, and the king could not lay a finger on it? Yet this asylum was violated. If that illustrious character were now alive, the thunder of his eloquence would shake the House about their ears, and the avenues would be crouded with auditors impatient for the decision. He would raise a storm from which the members would be glad to hide their heads, and hasten to their homes. But he (Sir Francis) was not so inexperienced as not to know the character of that House;—he knew it was power, not language: and that majorities in that House did not depend upon reasoning [The Speaker here interposed, suggesting the impropriety of the expression], Sir Francis resumed his speech, in reference to the conduct of the Attorney General, and said, he did not forget his predecessor (sir J. Scott) in that station. He had passed to power through the gradations of similar services to those the present directed his attention to, and was now on the way to the first high station in the kingdom. Sir Francis said he would yet do his utmost to stop that system of tyranny and corruption which fastened on the country; and though there was much cause to complain of the 8,000 prisoners delivered up on the failure of the late expedition, yet he did not complain so much of the surrender of these men, as he did of those who were illegally, unjustly, and cruelly confined.

Mr. *Canning* said, that if any gentleman could bring himself to think that Jacobin principles had ceased to produce their mischievous effects, or could imagine for a moment that they were shamed or run down in this country, the hon. baronet's speech would remove the delusion. That those principles had raged throughout Europe, and had produced such mighty mischiefs, and that the hon. baronet should profess his ignorance of them, gifted as he was with considerable talents, and considerable powers of eloquence, he considered as a grave and serious caution to gentlemen, lest they should be imposed on as the hon. baronet certainly was, when he confessed that the only conjecture he could make of those principles was, that they were principles of liberty; when the hon. baronet knew, as he certainly must know, that by those principles the governments of Europe had been overthrown: that by those principles aided by the sword, and the sword edged in turn by those principles, not only the governments that were free, but even the strongest despotisms, had been attacked and shaken; for on them the storm had most heavily fallen. Yet after all this waste and desolation, this country was safe. The hon. baronet was of opinion, that there was no security in the country, because it had resisted what he called principles of freedom. What the operation of those principles were, all could judge. What his right hon. friend had said, was, not that the great mass was infected in this country, for they were sound; but that factions still remained, who were looking round for a wide range for their ambition, and who, on invitation, were ready to ruin their country. The events on the continent furnished to such factions hopes and views for their ambitious projects. For these two or three years there was nothing in France that could either encourage or prompt ambition. But now there was the example of one man, for the first time risen to the height of power. In former attempts all who had enterprised for eminence, or intrigued for power, had been indiscriminately swept off to the scaffold. If ever there was an excuse for ambition it was now. The Jacobin principles had gained an ascendant in the present usurper. Had Buonaparté renounced the conduct and crimes of his predecessors? Certainly not. So far was he from dismissing the accomplices of those crimes, that he kept them about his person. Though a military despot, he was a Jacobin in his heart. In him Jacobin principles have a certain pledge for all the mischiefs they can produce. An hon. gentleman had put a question on the conduct of foreign princes towards their subjects, and had asked, whether in case of their misconduct, we should impute a

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similar attempt to our monarch at home? He had no objection to this question, had he put it distinctly. Had any monarch been seduced by the example of foreign potentates so as to infringe the laws, and attempt to destroy the constitution (as in the instance of James the 2nd), the country would certainly now, as it did then, interfere in defence of its laws and constitution. He would then call upon the hon. baronet, and ask him if religion, under the most black and malignant effects of its superstition, was at all comparable to the bigger mischiefs produced by this horrible superstition that overturned thrones, powers, and principalities, together with all their dependencies, wherever it went? This contagion still continued to rage, and it was our duty to guard against the example; for that was enough to produce the effect. When it was asserted, that in two years ministers had taken up but two or three persons, this proved that they were not inclined to abuse their trust. One of these was a Swedish baron, who had been naturalized, and this furnished a hint to the legislature to be sparing of that favour in future. The hon. baronet's charge of cruelty in the arrest of the persons at Manchester, might furnish language for a modern novel. He did not know why a warrant should not be executed by night as well as by day. The officers arrived there at night, and to prevent an escape secured their prisoners. The house was entered by legal instruments, and they acted according to law. He admitted that the cottage should be equally secure as the palace; and one of the main objects of the war was to maintain that equal security; but the French had made one indiscriminate wide waste of cottages and palaces. Thanks to parliament, in this country it had been so, and would continue so, as long as we could preserve the higher ranks from the infection of Jacobin principles, and the lower from the seduction of them.

Mr. *Wilberforce* said, that ministers were entitled to confidence, unless there appeared from their confidence and character reasons for refusing it. Parliament would also consider whether the persons who opposed this bill might not be imposed on, and whether they had not, under such imposition, been led solemnly to attest upon oath the characters of persons who were afterwards convicted of crimes from which they had escaped. This testimony had been given solemnly in a court of justice; and he thought that such gentlemen, if they did not confess their being imposed on, should at least refrain from the discussion. There was another fallacy that he wished to correct, which was, that when yon take away the Habeas Corpus act you take away all. This was not true. Many valuable rights remained. The liberty of the press remained, and even to a degree of licentiousness. The liberty of speech also remained. If the liberty of the subject was dammed up one way, it was open another.

The House divided:

Tellers.

Yeas	Mr. Canning - - -	69
	Mr. Buxton - - -	
Noes	Mr. Sheridan - - -	9
	Sir Francis Burdett -	

Feb. 19. On the order of the day for the second reading of the bill,

Mr. *Jolliffe* said, he had great objection to the renewal of this act. At any rate it ought first to expire, were it only for a day, rather than that it should be renewed year after year, like the Mutiny or Land-tax bill, as a matter of course, and thus become a part of the constitution.

Mr. *H. Lascelles* considered it necessary that the hands of government should be strengthened. To such measures as the present he attributed the general tranquillity, notwithstanding the efforts used to disturb all civilized order. He saw no reason why the generality of the people, who were well affected, should not be protected from the disaffected. It might as well be argued, that because the generality of the people were honest, there should be no law against robbers.

Mr. *Hobhouse* pointed out the inconsistency of ministers in the arguments urged in support of this bill. Upon appearance of danger, the liberties of the subject must be suspended; upon disappearance of the peril, the same arbitrary powers must be placed in the hands of ministers; and thus, whether the state were, or were not, exposed to risk, an individual might be committed under a warrant from the privy council, or secretary of state, and denied the privilege of demanding his trial within a given time. Farewell then, an eternal farewell, to the blessings of that great charter of our personal freedom, the Habeas Corpus act! Traitors, but for this measure, it was said, would no longer lurk in hiding places,

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but, on the first opportunity, would rush forward to accomplish the ruin of their country. What was this, but to contend that the suspension had produced only a hollow and delusive quiet? Was not this a strange method of demonstrating its efficacy?—Another argument which had been brought forward originated in fears of French Jacobinism. Those destructive principles, it was observed, were still prevalent in France, and attempts had been made, to spread the poison in this country. Did the dread of French principles restrain ministers from offering three several times to negotiate with Jacobin France? It had been said, that it was essential, in considering whether the overtures of an enemy should be received, to attend to the personal character of the chief ruler. But had not ministers solicited peace from men, whom they had reprobated for the murder of their sovereign? But, it was too much to assume, that Jacobinism was still prevalent in France. The power of Buonaparté rose upon the destruction of the Jacobin ascendancy. Was it not, then, the interest of Buonaparté to keep the Jacobins in the lowest state of subjection? But, notwithstanding these facts, an hon. gentleman had, in a former debate, asserted, that Buonaparté was a concealed Jacobin. How did this appear? It was one of the principles of Jacobinism to spread war and desolation among other nations, and to attempt the subversion of the most ancient monarchies. Did Buonaparté prove himself to be a Jacobin, because he had made overtures of peace to this country, and though they had been proudly and disdainfully rejected, had, without returning insult for insult, invited negotiation a second time?—An hon. gentleman had, on a former night, contended, that it was our duty to confide in administration. This doctrine was extremely convenient; but it became the House to inquire, whether ministers were deserving of this confidence. Was not their whole conduct a system of raising false alarms, and exciting groundless panics, with a view to acquire continued accessions of power? To grasp at illegitimate power by a system of terror, was a leading feature in the proceedings of the present administration. In such gentlemen he could place no confidence. It would be proper also to investigate how those arbitrary powers, which they now wished to be continued to them, had been exercised. This bill empowered the privy council, or secretary of state to detain persons after commitment, without allowing them the privilege of habeas corpus; but it gave no authority to commit without information upon oath, or having recourse to those forms which were required before a common magistrate. Had not many been sent to prison upon suspicion, on the mere warrant of the privy council, without any affidavit having been lodged against them, or the facts stated upon which the charge against them was grounded? Was not this a gross violation of the law of the land? For such conduct ministers must, at a future day, come down to the House, and pray for a bill of indemnity to shelter themselves against the punishment which they so justly merited.

Mr. *Sturges*, in a maiden speech, said, that he was not so much surprised, that gentlemen who had originally opposed this measure should now resist its continuance, as that they should expect others to renounce the opinions they had deliberately formed, and abandon the precautions they had wisely taken. Such an expectation, however, was formed on the late change which had taken place in France, which the hon. gentleman contended had destroyed Jacobinism, and with it the danger of its principles. But the effect of those principles was not so easily to be removed. The French revolution was unlike others, by which the person of a governor, or even the form of a government, had been altered, which were calculated, perhaps, to remove a local evil, or produce a local advantage, and were therefore local and partial only in their effects; but being a revolution in the opinions, doctrines, and principles by which all governments were held together, and the frame of social orders cemented, its effect was as general as its nature. It created in every state which was within its reach proselytes devoted to the authors of their creed, and professors of their faith abroad, more attached, therefore, to a foreign country than their own, and actuated by motives which became paramount to the duties of allegiance, and the obligations of natural patriotism. Hence had proceeded those professions of an enlarged patriotism too extensive for the narrow limits of our own island. Hence the numerous acts of these sectaries, from the addresses of their affiliated societies to the French Convention, in September 1792, after the deposition of the king,

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down to the last communication between the Executive Directory of England, and the Executive Directory of France. Let it be considered of what description of persons these sects were composed. They were of two classes: first, of those who from their birth, habits, and situation, must be ever ignorant of these subjects on which they are called to decide, but were deluded by the art and knavery of others, of whom they become the blind and servile instruments. Secondly, of the indigent and ambitious, seeking property which they did not possess, and power which they did not enjoy, without being very scrupulous as to the means by which either might be obtained. On which of these was it that the last revolution was to have a beneficial effect? Not surely on the ignorant, who were unable to judge of its tendency, and acted in obedience to their leaders—not surely on the ambitious, unless the acquisition of unbounded power, by revolutionary means, be a discouragement to rebellion, and successful usurpation the best antidote to treason.—The hon. gentleman had stated that Buonaparté had suppressed Jacobinism, and renounced the system of conquest which made it formidable. He would only remind the House, that in the many countries which he had conquered, he had imposed, in the true spirit of these principles, that very constitution to which he had himself sworn allegiance, but which he had afterwards destroyed.—The hon. gentleman had objected to the degree of confidence which was to be given to ministers. That confidence undoubtedly was considerable, and it would be given with more or less caution, in proportion as it was more or less likely to be abused. Of this they were enabled to judge from the past conduct of government. If the list on the table were referred to, it would be impossible for malignity itself, to attribute the commitment of those in custody to any other motive than the public security. The power given by the bill had been used with a degree of moderation, that proved, in the hon. gentleman's opinion, the measure to be unnecessary. It did, however, afford the most satisfactory assurance that the power would not be abused if it were still reposed in the same hands. It was said, that the confinement of persons for eighteen months without trial, was new, and contrary to the practice of the constitution. He would not trouble the House by detailing the different instances in which the Habeas Corpus act had been suspended, but only call to their recollection one of those events which proved that the best government, administered by the best men, might be endangered by the weakest of its subjects. He alluded to the conspiracy against the life of king William; for which some persons were brought to trial, and many others imprisoned. The Habeas Corpus act was suspended; but that was not enough: a power was given to his majesty to continue those who had not been tried, in custody, at first from year to year, at length during his pleasure. That pleasure continued during his majesty's life. On his demise the danger arising from a conspiracy against his person was not considered as extinct, and the same power was given to queen Anne. Their imprisonment continued during the whole of her reign; and on the accession of the present illustrious House a similar act was passed, which was again renewed on the accession of George 2nd, and the last survivor of these unfortunate persons (whose name was Bernardi) died in Newgate, in the year 1736, at the age of 82, after an imprisonment of 40 years, without any allowance from government. * He mentioned this case, not to applaud it, far from it, but for the purpose of showing what was the practice which had been referred to in the best times, from the period when the seals were in the hands of lord Somers, till they were placed in those of lord Hardwicke. It was not such power which was now solicited, and thinking the cause had not ceased to operate which made this measure of precaution unnecessary, that the power given had not been abused, and that it had produced the security we enjoyed, he should vote for the bill.

Sir *Francis Burdett* said, that much declamation was used against the Jacobin principles of France; and, if it was on account of the injustice and atrocities which they had caused to be committed, he opposed ministers on the same grounds, as it was their Jacobinical principles that he held in abhorrence; for never was there greater injustice than they had displayed in their conduct. The principles of government were common to all countries; if injustice constituted Jacobinism

* For the case of Major John Bernardi, see Howell's State Trials, Vol. 13, p. 759.

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in France, it also constituted Jacobinism in England. It would be better to repeal the Habeas Corpus act altogether, than thus continually to vote its suspension. The repeal would not change the law of the land, the suspension did. The Habeas Corpus in common law would still remain, which it did not now do. There was no part of the constitution which ministers had not violated. They had left to the country nothing of the constitution but its corruptions.

The *Attorney General* said, it had been imputed to him that he considered the passing of this bill as a matter of course. He certainly did not consider it in any such light. When he introduced the bill, he stated the reasons which he conceived justified him in proposing it, namely, that a secret committee of the House, after a most laborious inquiry, had given in a report on the 15th of March last, which he did not detail, indeed, because he thought it unnecessary to detail what was fresh in every one's memory. That report the House had formerly thought sufficient to authorize the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act; and he had only thought it necessary farther to state, that subsequent to that report being given in, and to the act which was passed in May last, for the suspension of that act, there was no evidence of a change having taken place sufficient to authorize its now being admitted to be in force. The present act would expire on the 1st of March. It was therefore necessary that a new one should be passed as soon as possible, or the delay would have the effect of liberating persons whom he was convinced no gentleman wished to see liberated; it would have the effect of liberating those men who had been brought from Ireland, and were now in confinement in Scotland. There were only two points to be considered in the present question; first, whether the suspension is necessary? and second, whether it is safe to entrust such additional power to ministers? The necessity was proved by the report above referred to. In the very first page of that report, it was stated by the committee, that in the whole course of the inquiry they had found the clearest proof of a systematic design and plan to overthrow the constitution and laws of the country, and to dissolve the connexion between Great Britain and Ireland. Was this true or false? Those who believed it to be true, would act upon it; for there was no evidence of a change having taken place since the report was made: with those who thought it false, he would not attempt to reason. The second question was, whether such power might be safely entrusted in the hands of ministers? The list of the persons in confinement, would show that they had not abused it. The only apprehension which could be formed on this point was, that they should exercise this power against the adversaries of their measures. But the character of the men in confinement was very different from that of any of these classes. Since the act now in force was passed, only two, or at most three, have been apprehended, and kept in custody. The first of these was a Swedish baron. The other two were, one an American, the other an Irishman, in situations the most obscure.

Mr. *Tierney* asked, whether there ever was an occasion before on which parliament had been called, without any reasons being stated, to vote for a bill which implied such a large suspension of our liberties? If there was such a precedent, let it be produced. The report which had been referred to contained a direct argument against the present measure, for, after stating all the circumstances, it added, that it would be expedient to suspend the Habeas Corpus till the 1st of March 1800. But there was no mention that this suspension ought to be continued for a longer time; on the contrary, from a specified time being mentioned, it was fair to infer, that, in the opinion of the committee, no longer suspension would be necessary. But, without supposing any designed abuse of this power, might not ministers have been deceived into an improper exercise of it? How could they prove that some of these unfortunate men, whom they have in custody, were not falsely accused by some under-strapper of the same rank with themselves? Had not some of these men been committed without an information on oath? If they had, ministers had grossly abused the powers entrusted to them. These men had been kept in custody, some of them two years. Would an opportunity ever be granted them to stand their trial before their country? If the House, in such circumstances, should vote the suspension, he washed his hands of the transaction, and should console himself with the reflexion that he had borne his testimony against it.

Lord *Belgrave* said, that the question

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of this night rested, first, on the necessity of the measure, both external and internal, and then on the opinion the House entertained of the persons in power: if the House entertained any doubts as to the conduct of ministers, they should petition his majesty to remove them. The committee of last year was of opinion, that the dangers were great; and no man could say that those dangers had so far disappeared as to render precaution unnecessary: even if we had not the proof, it could not be supposed that Ireland, which had been in a state of insurrection from one end to the other, could have been so, without the infection, in some degree, reaching this country. But let gentlemen look to an address of the London Corresponding Society of 1798, inserted in the report of last year, in which they will find these expressions, "we have not yet ceased from our exertions; we have persevered, and we will persevere." Now, I ask against such threats, ought we not to be upon our guard? The present situation of France was a strong argument for the continuance of the suspension. France was the thermometer of disaffection; as she was victorious it rose, as she was unsuccessful it fell in this country. From the relative situation of the two countries, the danger to be apprehended from the mischievous effects of Jacobinism was the greater. To reason with an hon. baronet (sir F. Burdett), who saw nothing but liberty in Jacobinism, and nothing but slavery in the British constitution, would be fruitless; but an hon. gentleman who preceded him, seemed to think that Jacobinism was destroyed by Buonaparté. Happily Jacobinism had lost much of its power to do mischief. But though shorn of its honours, it was not destroyed. It had been asked what Jacobinism was? It was every thing vile, base, degrading, and cruel; and if he were asked what a Jacobin was, he would say, a man who had renounced his religion, and with it, as a necessary consequence, his moral probity. He would turn, then, to Buonaparté, and ask whether, from all his public recorded acts, he was the man likely to have put down Jacobinism. If he had dismissed certain Jacobins at St. Cloud, he had dismissed them, not because they were Jacobins, but because they opposed his power; for he had replaced them with others as bad. Gentlemen, then, must not relax their efforts in combating Jacobinism, which was nothing but the evil spirit personified under various shapes and transformations. He who was not, therefore, a thorough hater of Jacobinism, in all its forms, could be no credit to human nature. The contest must not be continued one day, and relinquished another; to be successful, it must be constant, persevering, unremitting, eternal.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, that in reasoning on the principles of government, it was not fair to conclude, because a corrupt people, debased under a despotic state, had broken and then dashed about the chains that held them, that the people of England, accustomed to a mild and beneficent government, should be so restrained that their liberties should be ripped up and curtailed from mere unfounded suspicion. It could not be inferred, because a wolf had committed depredations on the fold, that a man should take down his dwelling, when the remedy would be to chain up this animal; nor, because the fire had burnt down a wooden bridge, that we should take down one built of solid stone. Nor should it be inferred, because the licentiousness of France had demolished all that was excellent in human institutions, that the freedom of Englishmen would do the same mischief. The people of England were not slaves broke loose from their chains, nor rushing from despotism into anarchy and disorder. For the votes of the House, he always had a due deference; but from committees selected from among the minister's friends, it was hardly possible that a just decision could be obtained. Such was his opinion on the perusal of the reports of the select committees. The attorney-general seemed to pay little attention to the verdict of a jury. This jury had negatived the report of a secret committee, and he preferred that verdict to the reports. The opinion of the chief justice Eyre on that occasion, was, that this mighty conspiracy turned out to be a conspiracy perfectly insignificant, a conspiracy without men, money, leaders, or even design in their schemes; their rendevous a back-garret, their arms two rusty muskets, and their exchequer about 10*l.* 15*s.* Such was its formidable appearance, and so inactive, that the learned judge said they even wanted zeal in the undertaking. The precedent from the reign of king William, was inapplicable to the present period. The majority of the nation at that period were Jacobites. The Jacobites were composed of the nobility and the landed in-

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terest, and were formidable from their principles and opposition to William. The act was made at the time of the conspiracy against his life. It was a specific act to confine those whose moral guilt was ascertained; but the present shut up every man upon vague suspicion.—Mr. Sheridan then reviewed the state of Ireland under lord Fitzwilliam, and attributed the outrages, cruelties, and atrocities, not to French principles, but British councils. The effects of such councils were predicted by earl Fitzwilliam. He then entered on the abuse of the power lodged in the hands of ministers, evidenced in the case of colonel Despard, and the infamous conduct of Aris, the keeper of the prison. Another abuse of power was under the Alien bill. This bill, said to be for political purposes, was perverted into an instrument of family protection; as persons who had paid their addresses to the daughters of gentlemen had been on that account taken up under this bill, and sent out of the kingdom. No new reason had been given why this act should be continued.

Mr. *Ellison* said, he supported the administration, because he was convinced, that by so doing he was rendering his country essential service. He considered the Habeas Corpus act, as one of the bulwarks of our constitution; it stood between the king and his people, and was a great security for both in ordinary times; but in extraordinary times there might be reasons for suspending the operation of that great law for the safety of the body politic. The present, in his opinion, was that time. The people, if they thought fit, had a right to suspend that law; and the people spoke their sentiments in that House; for the people were fairly represented in that House, at least he thought so. Was there any material change in the contest in which we were engaged since parliament had determined that this act should be suspended? He took neither the opinions nor the wills of others for his guide, while he had experience and the evidence of facts. By that evidence he was led to think, that the common enemy still aimed at the destruction of this country. After what we had all seen, it was to him a matter of astonishment, that any gentleman should say, that this measure was not necessary for the safety of the country. He believed it was a measure that would do, as it had done, much good to the country; and he believed that the people wished it to pass into a law; not, indeed, to enable ministers to carry on the war for the restoration of the Bourbons; but to bring about a safe and honourable peace.

Mr. *Canning* said, that the fallacy of Mr. Sheridan, throughout the whole of his speech was this—he had confounded the mass of the people of England with the objects of this bill; and he had, under that fallacy, argued, that the bill was a coercion on the people of England. There was no such coercion intended—thank God, there was no need; but because there was no disposition in the people to render such coercion necessary, it did not thence follow that there should be no such bill as this; for the objects of this bill, although few, were nevertheless fit objects for the coercion of it, and the House would be remiss if they did not provide a remedy for the evil, which would be felt if such persons were under no restraint. The manner in which his hon. friend had quoted the language of the learned judge before whom the state trials took place, was not intended to have any effect, except as a pleasant sally; in truth, he had put into his mouth words which that great lawyer never uttered—and yet these were the facts, as they were called, on which matured sentiments were to be set aside, and the good sense of the people carried away. They were to believe that a formal acquittal of a person charged with a specific crime could not, in the nature of things, possibly leave behind it any suspicion of moral guilt; and all this while we recollected that we had but narrowly escaped destruction, from the machinations of those very persons and their associates. His hon. friend proceeded to observe, that there was now no danger, because what had happened in France had opened the eyes of all mankind. If this conviction had taken place, how happened it that it did not take place sooner? We all knew the pre-eminence of Buonaparté—few doubted the superiority of his talents—none questioned that his power was at this hour as great, if not greater, than that possessed by any other man; and yet gentlemen who said that the eyes of all mankind were now opened by what had happened in France, seemed to have forgotten the progress of the French revolution. What was the great evil of the French revolution?—The facility with which ambition might gratify itself at the expense of millions of the

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human race. Were he to define what ambition was, he would say it was that quality in the human mind that altered its colour as circumstances might alter, but whose nature was invariably the same, and led to good or to evil according to the temper and pursuits of the person who possessed it. The ambition in his right hon. friend, for instance, led him forward in a career of virtue—the ambition of a Jacobin was to procure and preserve power by proscription, by plunder, by confiscation, and by death; or by the utter destruction of all establishments, civil or religious; and by the erection of that hideous anarchy in which order was buried, and confusion triumphed in the ruins. Such had been, with various shades of difference, the ruling principle of all the prime actors in the French revolution from La Fayette to Buonaparté. Here Mr. Canning went over all the leading actors in the French revolution, as Mirabeau, Condorcet, Brissot, Robespierre, Carnot, Reubel, Barras, &c. giving to each appropriate epithets to describe the leading features of their character; and observed, that all their peculiar qualities were met and blended in Buonaparté. Why did he mention those things? He mentioned them, to show how very slowly the admirers of French principles could be brought to see their error—how much time it took to convince men of the hideous form of what they had originally admired as a beauty. He then passed on to the observation of Mr. Sheridan, that there was a great difference between the people of England and the people of France. He admitted there was much, but he objected to the argument, because it proved too much; for it proved that no provision should be made against the wicked if they were few: and to show what the contagion of an evil example might be, he called the attention of the House to the situation of Switzerland, where those men who were proverbial for mildness, candour, simplicity, and an attachment to that system of protection to persons and property which elevated them in the opinion of all who knew them, had been made to change, as it were, their very nature, and reduce their country to a scene of plunder, confiscation, proscription, and bloodshed. Such were the effects of listening to a system of Jacobinical reformation, which was another name for the destruction of all the establishments of the world. But his hon. friend had observed, that we had in this country a large volunteer force for the protection of our liberties. He admitted we had such a force, and he rejoiced in it; nor had he the least doubt of its efficacy, should the season arrive for calling it into action; but he hoped the day was far off when this country would be obliged to military force for the preservation of its liberties. For the preservation of our civil liberties, the constitution was provided with civil arms. He knew it was a common parlance that the liberties of this country had been sealed with the blood of our ancestors. This was not true to any considerable extent; for the liberties of this country had been secured with less bloodshed than that of any other country on the face of the globe. It was not upon the plain of battle, but upon this plain, the floor of that House, that the constitution of England had triumphed.

And the question being put, That the said bill be now read a second time, the House divided:

Tellers.

Yeas,	Lord Viscount Belgrave Mr. Sturges	98
Noes,	Mr. Hobhouse Sir Francis Burdett	12

Debate in the Lords on the Habeas Corpus Suspension Bill.] Feb. 27. On the order of the day for the third reading of the bill,

Lord *King* said, that he had always been taught to look upon the Habeas Corpus act as one of the most material safeguards of the liberties of the people. It was the opinion of the most celebrated writers, that it ought never to be suspended but upon occasions of the most imminent necessity: those occasions had been pointed out, and were, internal insurrection, or an apprehension of foreign invasion. In 1798, when the suspension was moved for, ministers had laid before the House his majesty's message, which stated the great preparations making by the enemy for the invasion of this country, and a variety of reasons as to the state of the country were then brought forward, a shadow of which did not appear to exist at present. When the act was moved to be suspended, it was upon the report of a special committee of each House, which directly stated that an actual conspiracy was then carrying on within the

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kingdom for the purpose of overturning the government. The suspension had been continued in 1799, on account of the critical situation of Ireland; but now their lordships were desired to continue it still farther, without any reason whatever being adduced. Since the revolution, the Habeas Corpus act had only been suspended three times: on account of the assassination plot in the reign of king William; in 1715, and in 1745; the two last being periods of actual rebellion; but even then, so jealous was parliament of this great bulwark of our liberties, that they would only consent to suspend it for three months. From the present mode of proceeding, he began to fear that this was only a prelude to making the suspension perpetual. When was there a likelihood of putting an end to it? If we might believe what had been said in another place, not until Jacobinism was extinguished. He professed he did not understand what was meant by Jacobinism. It was a term of abuse indiscriminately thrown on every person who differed in sentiment from ministers. If, however, there were really 80,000 of these incorrigibles, as had somewhere been said by a certain great master of this kind of political arithmetic; and if what had been said on another occasion was true, that the principles of Jacobinism, once imbibed, were never to be eradicated, long indeed, he feared, it would be, before this great bulwark of our liberties would be restored. He condemned the great length of time which had elapsed since the imprisonment of the 29 persons now immured in different gaols, some upwards of two years, without being brought to trial. He also reprobated the sending them from prison to prison, which operated as a punishment before conviction.

The Earl of *Carlisle* said, that no man more sincerely regarded the Habeas Corpus act than he did. He revered it as the Palladium of our liberties, the fortress of our freedom, but he did not wish to see it made use of as the strong-hold of rebellion. He, for one, was perfectly ready for a limited time, on an ascertained emergency, to part with all the advantages of this great instrument of security of person, in order to possess its full benefits when the danger should have passed away. The horrid principles which had occasioned the suspension appeared to be weakened; but were not yet extinct. He saw no danger in trusting such a power to ministers, who had used it so leniently. That such was the case, was evident, from the opinions of the people, who had not expressed the smallest discontent at such a power being so entrusted.

Lord *Holland* said, that if the legislature should continue to act upon the principles which the noble earl had advanced, we should never again enjoy the blessings of liberty. The noble earl had said, that the Habeas Corpus should be again suspended because the people made no complaints of the manner in which ministers had exercised the powers entrusted to them. As long, then, as the country remained in a state of tranquillity, the same arguments might be used; and if discontents should arise, then it would be said that the constitution was in danger, and that it was necessary to allow persons to be taken up upon suspicion, that we might defeat the purposes of the seditious. At any rate, as long as the republic of France subsists, so long the Habeas Corpus act must be suspended. Was it to be borne, that a valuable privilege should be for ever withheld from the people without any reason, or for reasons completely puerile? When it was allowed on all hands that nothing but extreme necessity could justify the measure proposed, was it not incumbent to show that that necessity existed? But, supposing the country was in a very critical state, what remedy would the present act apply? The only powers it would legally vest in government would be, to retain in custody those whom they meant to try; but for whose conviction, though there could be no doubt of their guilt, sufficient evidence could not, at the moment, be obtained; or to retain those in custody, who could be easily convicted, but the evidence which would be given upon whose trials it would be highly impolitic to disclose. If ministers had only made use of these powers, and if there was a call for the measure, he should certainly vote for it; but they had acted on very different principles. Of the seven years of the war, the Habeas Corpus act had been suspended five; and of the multitudes who had been imprisoned in virtue of that suspension, few had been brought to trial, and only one convicted. Neither was that person guilty of treason against this country, or connected with any societies, or any individuals of consequence, in the kingdom. None of his machinations

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could ever have brought about rebellion or insurrection. What harm would have followed from his going over to the enemy with a paper which was signed by nobody? Ought the constitution to be suspended for years because O'Coigley was condemned? He contended, that government had a right to retain in custody only those whom they intended to try; and he would put it to the conscience of their lordships, whether more harm would have accrued from bringing to trial the twenty-nine persons now in gaol, than had accrued from suspending the Habeas Corpus act? But it was said to be merely used as a measure of precaution to protect the constitution from the evil designs of the many turbulent men who longed for its overthrow. The rational principles on which the French revolution was commenced, the plausible, though pernicious doctrines which had been professed in its later stages, and the splendid success which had attended the arms of the republic, might have dazzled many, and made some in this country long to see the visionary theories of freedom reduced to practice. But was it not likewise probable that the horrid crimes which had been committed in the name of liberty, and the final subjugation of France to a military government, had made many incline to arbitrary power, and adopt tory and high church principles, who were formerly animated with a hatred to slavery? It was one of the great evils of the French revolution that it had brought the cause of freedom into discredit; and there could be no doubt that the ancient spirit of Britons had been nearly abandoned, since they had patiently borne the most alarming abridgment of their privileges, and the most flagrant infringement on their rights. If one set of causes had operated, why might not another? The prerogative had less to fear at present from the encroachments of the people, than at any former period. Much had been said of the leniency with which government had exercised its powers. He was old fashioned enough to think that the good treatment of the subject should not be at the discretion of any individuals, but should be secured to him by law. The imprisonment even of twenty-nine persons was no strong mark of leniency. He should like to know whether they were kept in custody to be tried, or merely to deprive them of their freedom, and to punish them for their supposed offences. But, granting that the conduct of ministers had been mild and lenient, yet to keep up a notion that security was owing not to the protection of the law, but to the mercy of a few individuals, must be attended with the most fatal consequences. Men, in ceasing to owe obligations to the constitution, must lose all affection for it, and see without regret another erected in its stead. Judge Blackstone had recommended, that we should surrender our liberties for a while in order to secure them for ever; but he had added, that the occasion should be urgent indeed, and that even then we should not consent to part for any length of time with the Palladium of the constitution.

Lord *Eldon** said, that the noble lord had argued, that there was only one solitary conviction, and that in that person's case there was no treason produced against this country. But the fact was, that the person convicted was proved to have been planning, with disaffected bodies of men in this country, the destruction of the British interest in Ireland; and surely the noble lord need not be told, that a person attempting to sever the crown of Ireland from that of England, was guilty of an overt act of treason. The noble lord had argued, that none should be apprehended but such as could be brought to trial; but he should know, that cases might occur, in which for want of two witnesses, persons could not be legally convicted, though no doubt remained of their guilt. But would the noble lord say because in this country a person could not be put upon his trial for high treason without the testimony of two witnesses, that therefore no danger existed? With regard to what had passed at Maidstone, would the noble lord argue, that, because sufficient legal proof could only be brought against one of the men who were put upon their trial, the legislature should not have endeavoured to prevent the mischief? He would venture to say, that to the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act was owing the preservation of the crown in the house of Hanover; and that by it late and former conspiracies had been broken to pieces.

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* Sir John Scott: created baron Eldon, July 18, 1799.

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Proceedings in the Commons respecting the Deficiency of the last Crop of Grain.] Feb. 18. The House having resolved itself into a Committee on the Report respecting the Assize of Bread, and the Deficiency of the last crop of Grain, [See p. 1403.]

Lord *Hawkesbury* said, that there was one proposition which he wished to submit to the committee; but before he made it, he would offer a few observations upon the state of the country at the present time. The origin of this committee was certainly to be found in governor Pownall's bill;* but even in 1773, the promoters of that bill were of the same opinion which the best informed men now entertained, namely, that little relief could be obtained in a time of scarcity by interfering with the conduct of millers, or subjecting them to different regulations from those which now directed them. There was but one proposition which he had now to make. He thought that this was a subject on which little could be done by measures of legislation, on which much more might be expected from the private influence of gentlemen, by example in their own families, and by recommendation to others, than by any proceedings of parliament. Upon the subject of the present scarcity, there was one argument which had often been used by gentlemen on the other side of the House; namely, that the war was the cause of the present scarcity. Did gentlemen mean by such an assertion that the state of hostilities in which we were placed with some countries in Europe, prevented the importation of grain which otherwise might have been imported into this country? Or did they mean that the war increased the consumption of corn in the country? As to the supposition that the war prevented the importation of corn, it was a known fact, that the average importation for the last seven years was as high as that of any preceding period. In 1796, the importation was greater than was ever known before: and amounted to nearly 900,000 quarters of grain. The war, then, could have no direct influence in preventing the importation of corn. But it might be said, that it operated by an indirect influence, that it prevented us from importing corn from countries where we could be supplied, because with these countries we were in a state of hostility. The fact was, that it was from the Baltic, and from America, that we received in ordinary the supplies of grain which the country required. Before the war, France did not grow any considerable quantity of grain above that which she consumed; and the produce of the Netherlands was consumed by the inhabitants, by the United Provinces, and by the people in the less fertile districts upon the Rhine. The present scarcity was certainly alarming; but the danger was much exaggerated. This might be proved by the statement of a few circumstances. The consumption of grain in the country must be estimated from the number of the consumers, and the amount of the consumption of each individual. The number of consumers of wheaten bread depended much upon the abundance of the crop, and the consequent price of wheaten bread. On an average, one third of the people did not consume wheaten bread. A great majority of the people in Scotland, Westmorland, Cumberland, the North Riding of Yorkshire, part of Lancashire, of Wales, Cornwall, and the northern parts of Devonshire, consumed bread made of oats, barley, and other grain. Now, as to the quantity of wheat consumed, a quarter of wheat in the year for each man was the general calculation. This allowance would require between eight and nine millions of quarters, to supply this country for a year. The produce of the country varied in different years; but the average computation between very high and very low seasons might come nearest the truth. This average did not feed the country; for the average importation for several years back might be estimated at one twentieth of the whole consumption. The deficiency of the late crop might be estimated at one third of the usual crop, which must be added to the one twentieth usually imported, in order to estimate what importation would be necessary this season. It must, however, be considered, that there was in the country a stock in hand from the preceding harvest sufficient to supply one month. But if we also take the foreign corn in the country at the same period, there was certainly much more than would be consumed in a month. Considering all these circumstances, the probable amount of the importation necessary this season, would be about 600,000 quarters of wheat; whereas in 1796 the importation was more than

* See Vol. 17, p. 697.

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800,000 quarters. The millers and others skilled in the subject, had recommended some regulations as to the use of new bread; and had computed, that by such regulations there might be a saving of one fortnight of the whole consumption. It had also been stated, that millers, when the price of grain was high, and consequently when bread was dear, extracted from the grain a greater quantity of flour than they did at other times. This would ford a second saving. A third would arise from the use of substitutes for bread. As the price of grain, even in those countries from which we could receive a supply was high, it was to be feared that the high price of grain in this country was inevitable; but from a review of all the circumstances, it might be collected, that there was no real danger of scarcity. It was clear, that this country did not feed itself. For several years back, the importation of grain had amounted annually to 400,000 quarters. This might appear strange when we recollected the vast sums expended in bounties for the exportation of grain. So late as the administration of Mr. Pelham, not less than 500,000*l.* were stated to be paid annually in bounties on the exportation of grain. What had caused the difference? Had the agriculture of the country diminished? No; the improvement of our agriculture had kept pace during this disastrous war, as some gentlemen had called it, with the increase of our trade, the extension of our commerce and the augmentation of our power. The inclosure of waste lands had certainly been one principal means of improving the agriculture of the country. Now, during seven years of the most prosperous peace that this country ever enjoyed, the number of inclosure bills which passed the House amounted to 227. Whereas, during the last seven years of war, the number had been 479. Let us also attend to the improvement which had taken place in husbandry. This could not be doubted to have taken place in many districts, particularly in the low lands of Scotland, and in the border counties. If, then, the agriculture of the country had kept pace in improvement with its trade and commerce, why had such a change taken place in the adequacy of the produce of the country to the support of its inhabitants? It must be imputed solely to the immense increase of population, and to the increased consumption of the individual inhabitants, in consequence of their increased wealth. There never was an instance of a highly flourishing state, which had attained the period of its grandeur, producing enough to maintain its inhabitants. If we looked back to the republic of Rome, we should find this observation confirmed. As soon as it attained power and greatness, it was obliged to have recourse to other countries for supplies of grain. Sicily was its first granary, and afterwards Egypt. The crop then, in this country, was not sufficient for the supply of its inhabitants: and when this and the ordinary importation failed, the best method that could be adopted was, the use of substitutes. It was indeed difficult to introduce them. It was difficult to change old habits; but for such a purpose the attempt ought to be made. If this plan were adopted, this country contained in itself the means of feeding its inhabitants. At present the method of feeding it was not the most economical. Great economy might be introduced, and every person would rejoice, that by the efforts of individuals (and it is but respectful to mention the name of count Rumford) this economy was already reduced by many to practice. It appeared from his calculations and statements, that one third more sustenance might be derived from many articles of provision, without abridging the luxuries of the rich than was usually drawn from them. The use of substitutes was particularly to be recommended in charities and in parochial relief. This would be one means of introducing them; and though their general introduction might not be effected at once, yet it must be recollected that this was not the first year of scarcity that we had felt; that it would not be the last: that within these five years it was the second time that a scarcity had occurred. Thus it appeared, that though inclosures had been going on rapidly, and agriculture had been improving, the increase of population had out run them. The noble lord then moved, "That leave be given to bring in a bill to prohibit any person or persons from selling, or offering for sale, any bread which has not been baked for a certain number of hours."

Mr. *Hobhouse* was glad that this subject had at last been taken into consideration. He admitted that the scarcity was principally to be attributed to the deficiency of the crops, but insisted that the war not only increased consumption, but cut off some of the means of supply, by shutting many of the ports of Europe

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against us, and rendered every article of import dearer, by the advanced price of freight and insurance. With respect to the proposed remedy, he approved it, as far as it went, and was glad to hear that some others were in contemplation. He thought, however, that little could be expected from positive laws, and that more was to be done by exhortation, by example, and by charity properly distributed. He had no doubt that the affluent would exert themselves upon the present trying occasion. He would himself make every effort.

The *Speaker* said, he found it stated in the report of 1795, on the testimony of a miller, that excellent bread might be made of the whole wheat, without taking away any of the bran: for he had himself seen bread made of that kind. He had now to state, on the authority of a person, to whose exemplary life he owed the first of all obligations, that the best bread was made of the entire wheat. On mentioning the different classes into which the ancients divided their bread, he said, that the first was made of the finest flour; the second was a mixture of that flour with the pollard; and the third class was the whole flour with the bran: that, of those three kinds of breads, the first and second seemed to have been little used; but that the third sort was in general use, from its excellent effects. On experiment, it was found by chemists that this sort contained a vast quantity of essential oil; and in this consisted the true spirit of the wheat: not that which was fiery and caused fermentation, but that which was mild and nutricious. It was also proved that damaged wheat might be amended by a commixture with good. The cultivation of potatoes ought to be encouraged. This might be brought into consumption about July and August, and might fill up the time between the old and new harvest. He next alluded to the rise of butchers' meat. From the lower parts of the country, which had been flooded from the continual rains, great quantities of cattle were destroyed and sent up early to market; in order to remedy that evil, he wished the country to get a little repose. This might be done by the use of swine, the increase of which he recommended. He would also recommend the importation of rice. This was a food suitable to sedentary persons, and might be sold for three-halfpence the pound. He made a handsome panegyric on the liberality of the country, which had so generously come forward in relief of the poor. The different classes were more nearly linked together; and the poor were now taught to consider those as their friends and benefactors, whom they regarded before with an invidious and angry eye.

Mr. *W. Bird* thought that the noble lord went too far in saying that any man who connected the war and the scarcity together, was no good subject. He, for one, must be of opinion, that though the war was not the cause of the scarcity, it had occasioned the continuance of that scarcity. As we could not depend upon a large supply from abroad, it behoved us to decrease the consumption of corn. He thought it little better than a mockery, merely to recommend the use of stale bread, and that the rich should not distribute their charity to the poor in bread. For his part, it was not the poor whom he wished to see deprived of the use of bread; he would rather recommend a saving in this article to the rich, who abounded in superfluities. Let the rich but deny themselves this supply for a month or two, and they would serve the poor effectually, and bring down the blessings of thousands upon them.

Mr. *Wilberforce* said, it appeared to him, that if the whole grain were used, if not universally, yet in part, it would serve to lengthen out the supply. He also thought, that the legislature were warranted in interfering, and particularly that in all parochial relief of bread or flour, it should consist only of that made of the whole grain. He did not believe that the scarcity arose from the war, or from any increase of population, but that it was owing to the unfavourable season. There were various sources whence the country might look for supplies. The first of these was importation. Although no one ought to speak slightly of the supply to be derived from importation, yet the means of relief now proposed were as likely to be beneficial as that to be derived from importation. Another mode of œconomy was, that of bringing animal food in the shape of soup into more general use. Economy in the use of flour, was required in those shops in which rolls, fancy biscuits, &c., were displayed. If the use of oats were prohibited, except for the food of man (allowing for the demand that would be made for the cavalry, mail-coach

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horses, &c.) this would go a great way to substitute plenty for scarcity. The annual consumption of oats was computed at ten millions of quarters. One ample source of supply was our fisheries. Vast quantities of herrings were caught. There was also the mackarel fishery on the coasts of Cornwall, which might be carried to a prodigious extent; and if proper encouragement were given for the catching, curing, and bringing to market, these various sorts of fish, the greatest advantages would result to the community. He understood also from Mr. Arthur Young that early potatoes and beans might be brought into use in the month of June; and a few thousands granted in premiums for the growth of them would bring to market a vast quantity.

Leave was given to bring in the bill. The blank for specifying the number of hours was filled up with "twenty-four." The bill went through all its stages on the following day.

Proceedings in the Lords relative to the Deficiency of the last Crop of Grain.] Feb. 14. Lord *Auckland* said, it was in the recollection of all, that a long succession of wet weather had prevailed through the whole of the last summer. It was also well known that the actual prices of every kind of grain were high, and increasing. The House of Commons had thought proper to enter into an investigation, both as to the nature of the evil, and the best mode of alleviating it. Their committee had just made a report, accompanied by an interesting statement of evidence. It was his object, in the first place, to put their lordships in possession of that report. With this view he intended to move the appointment of a committee, and then to send a message to the Commons, requesting a copy of the report in question. The committee thus opened, would be ready for any investigation that circumstances might make expedient. Generally speaking, he had little hope of public advantage from parliamentary interference with the produce and distribution of the necessaries of life. On the other hand, he was not so attached to bookish systems, and to the cold principles of political economy, as to presume that it could be practicable, or indeed desirable, to keep a subject of national anxiety from the cognizance of the guardians of the nation. Certainly, much benefit might result from their lordships example, if they should think proper to make a great and timely reduction in the consumption of wheat within their respective families. It would be seen in the report of the Commons, that persons conversant in the subject, estimate the last year's produce at little more than half a crop. The same persons estimate that the stock in hand at the period of the last harvest might be equal, at the utmost, to two months consumption. It would also be found in the evidence, that barley and oats, from which great aid had been derived in the emergency of 1796, were at present scarce and high priced. The only resources against such a deficiency were an increased importation, and a decreased consumption. From every account that he had seen from foreign countries, we must not expect to obtain between the period of the last and next harvest a larger quantity than 660,000 quarters; being about one-twelfth part of our annual average consumption. The remaining deficiency could only be supplied by a diminution in our consumption. Such a diminution would be forced to a certain degree by the natural effect of high prices, and also by the partial or occasional want of grain in some districts to supply the usual demand. It could not, however, be doubted, that in private families better circumstanced than the labouring classes, and possessing various kinds of nourishment, a reduction in the use of bread might be made to the extent of a fourth, or perhaps of a third, and with little inconvenience. There were in the kingdom above 700,000 houses which paid assessed taxes. If a considerable proportion of these houses could be induced to adopt the measure of reduction, the effect would be great, and might avert a calamity, to the mere possibility of which every provident mind must look forward with uneasiness. —His lordship then moved, "That all the Lords who have been present this session be appointed a Committee to consider the most effectual means of remedying any inconvenience which may arise from the Deficiency of the last Crop of Grain, and report to the House."

The motion was agreed to, and a Message was sent to the Commons to request a copy of their Report.

Feb. 20. The Archbishop of *Canterbury* addressed the House at some length on the scarcity of corn. The venerable prelate took a general view of the subject, and

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lamented in feeling terms the inconveniences and distresses which the lower orders of society must unavoidably suffer. He dwelt upon the great effect which the examples of those in higher stations must have on persons of the above descriptions; and it was strongly incumbent upon them, and more especially on the legislators of the country, to strain every nerve to meet the evil, and make it bear as lightly as possible upon the shoulders of the poor. He did not recommend a direct legislative interference on the present occasion, but spoke highly in approbation of the good effects of solemn engagements made, and strictly adhered to, by different bodies of men, with a view to diminish the consumption of flour, and promote the use of approved substitutes for that article in their respective families. So strongly was he impressed with this conviction, that he would then propose a set of resolutions, forming an Agreement to be signed by such of their lordships as approved the idea, to carry certain measures into effect, tending to diminish the use of flour, &c. in their respective families.—He then moved,

"That, in consequence of the high price and deficient supply of wheat and other grain, it is expedient to adopt such measures as may be practicable for diminishing the consumption thereof during the continuance of the present pressure, and for introducing the use of such articles as may conveniently be substituted in the place thereof:

"That the Agreement hereunto subjoined be engrossed, and laid upon the table of this House, in order to be subscribed by any lord of this House who shall think fit to subscribe the same himself, or in his name by any other lord:

"In consequence of the high price of grain, and the evils arising therefrom, we the undersigned, agree, that until the tenth day of October next we will not consume, nor permit to be consumed in any week within our respective families, more wheaten bread than in the proportion of one quarten loaf for each of the individuals of whom our said families may be composed; and, also, that, during the same period, we will discontinue, and cause to be discontinued within our said families, all pastry."

The Earl of *Darnley* said, he could not consider the proposition of the right reverend prelate, however well intended, as likely to be of the least efficiency; indeed, he was persuaded that all legislative interference upon such subjects was more likely to do harm than good. He had not been in the House a few days ago, when a noble lord (Auckland) had sounded the trumpet of alarm upon the apprehended scarcity of wheat, and wheat flour. That noble lord had made the report of the committee of the House of Commons respecting bread, corn, &c. the ground of his argument, and had thence very incautiously declared, that the crops of the last harvest had failed to an extent, far exceeding what would be found to be the case. With regard to the report, it rested entirely on the testimony of two of the persons examined before the committee, one of them, Mr. Arthur Young, the other, Mr. Claude Scott, an eminent corn-factor. Now, he could not help thinking, from what had come within his own personal knowledge, that Mr. Young was extremely mistaken, not only in stating the deficiency of the last crop to amount to more than one-third, and in some cases to half of the average produce, but also in his asserting that something between twenty-two and twenty-four bushels, was an accurate computation of an average crop. Surely, before the whole country was to be told that the scarcity was so great, that there was every reason to dread a famine, the fact should not depend solely on the testimony of two witnesses, and one of them himself a corn-factor, and consequently not to be supposed free from prejudices. In the county of Kent, he did not believe the crops had fallen short in any thing like the proportion stated. With regard to the proposition of the right reverend prelate, they appeared to him to be inefficient to do any good; on the contrary, they would tend to occasion an artificial scarcity, and raise the price, which was always the case when parliament interfered in such matters. What had been done in the winter of 1795, when a similar agreement as that now proposed had been entered into, instead of having any good consequences, had produced a very unfavourable operation. If the House now came into the agreement, the probable effect would be, that it would influence the farmer, in expectation of higher prices, to withhold his wheat from the market, and bread would be still dearer than it was at present. If parliament interfered at all, they ought to do something still more effectual; but the first ground of it should be evidence

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given at the bar of the House, and in that case he had little doubt but it would be found that the real scarcity was nothing near so great as it was represented to be in the report. He therefore moved the order of the day.

The Earl of *Liverpool* agreed, that any legislative act, made by way of interference in an exigency of this nature, might be attended with mischievous consequences; but he could not conceive that the report of the House of Commons, on the evidence of two gentlemen whose characters stood so high in the world, could be attended with any such consequences. He thought the right reverend prelate deserved the thanks of the country for his early interference. The prices of wheat had risen rapidly. The calamity unfortunately existed, and ought to be met by every means in our power as speedily as possible. At the same time he was free to confess, that the danger seemed to be exaggerated.

Lord *Auckland* said, that the noble baron accused him of having, on a former day, sounded the trumpet of alarm upon the momentous question of the deficiency of grain. He would answer to the accusation, that if he had sounded the trumpet of truth, he had discharged a sacred duty to his countrymen; and certainly he would not be discouraged by the admonitions of those who were persuading themselves, and were endeavouring to persuade others, to go forwards towards a precipice with a thoughtless step, and with closed eyes. Parliamentary reasons and silence were, in some cases, neither desirable nor possible under such a constitution as ours. It was, however, an entire mistake to suppose, that when he first mentioned this subject to the House a few days before, he had expressed any opinion as to the specific failure of the last crops. He had merely adverted to the evidence stated in the report of the Commons, according to which the deficiency had been from one-third to one-half below an average crop. It might be true, that an alarm respecting the supposed insufficiency of crops might create an increase of price, and it was also true that high prices were in themselves an evil. But if it should appear in the result, that the high prices were founded in real scarcity, how infinitely fortunate, would it be, that a timely alarm had been given? Such an alarm might prevent the suspicion of artificial scarcity, and all the popular excesses which were often occasioned by such suspicions. But, above all things, it would promote that disposition to economy which the resolutions proposed by his venerable relation were meant to make efficient. It was a short-sighted objection to those resolutions, that their impression on the public mind might tend to increase the high prices of grain, the scarcity of which some individuals were pleased to consider as in a great degree artificial. Why they should so consider it in opposition to their own recollection of a Summer and Autumn wet and unfavourable almost beyond example, he would not discuss. He would only remark, that when the incredulity of noble lords, under the circumstances just described, was made the motion for rejecting all precautions against a calamity at least very possible, it reminded him of an anecdote which he believed might be found in the Spectator. "How much wiser am I than you?" says a thoughtless profligate to a good bishop: "I enjoy all the gratifications and pleasures of my present existence without limit and without restraint; because I do not believe that there is a future state." "Young man," replies the bishop, "I pursue the conduct which my firm persuasion of a future day of judgment enforces on me. If my creed should be ill-founded, I shall, at the worst, have made no sacrifices that are not amply compensated by conscious rectitude, and by the self-satisfaction attendant on virtue and on religion. But if you should be mistaken in your pretended incredulity, the consequence will be most terrible to you."—Lord Auckland next adverted to some remarks which had been made by lord Liverpool, not as objections to the proposed resolutions, but with a wish to ascertain their practicability. It was meant, he said, by recommendation and example to induce the high and middle classes to diminish the use of bread in their families, not in a vague and fallacious proportion below the ordinary consumption, but a limited and specified quantity. On a full inquiry there was reason to believe, that in times of plenty the ordinary consumption, exclusive of pastry, and of waste in many ways, was about a quartern loaf and a half quartern loaf per week for each individual, or nearly fifteen ounces per day. It was now proposed that, till the next harvest, the families of the classes above-mentioned should consume only one quartern loaf (sixty-nine ounces) per week for each individual, be-

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ing at the rate of about ten ounces per day. In all families above the labouring classes, this reduction would be practicable. To this it was proposed to add the discontinuance of all pastry. In many families these reductions would be more than a half of the ordinary consumption; he would, however, suppose it to be only a third.—Considerable aid might be expected from other countries: not, however, to the extent which some persons supposed. Least of all, could much be attainable from France, even if the intercourse were open. It was well known that in times of peace and of good harvests, France never had produced sufficient for her own consumption. M. Necker had explained this circumstance with much detail and accuracy. His countrymen would find their best and surest supply in their own resources, and most particularly by reducing their consumption conformably to the resolutions proposed.

The Earl of *Suffolk* said, that the magnitude of the evil might be estimated by the enormous price of wheat. It was their duty to promote every means of abridging the consumption. He wondered that among the various substitutes proposed, that of rice was not pre-eminently held fourth. One-third of the inhabitants of one quarter of the world subsisted on that vegetable alone. Rice, when mixed with flour, afforded a good and palatable bread. Proper substitutes should be one of the objects of inquiry. Indeed, if ample premiums were held out for the suggestion of substitutes, it might be beneficial, as the evil was not only a present, but a growing one. There were great and extensive tracts of land in various parts of the kingdom, lying unproductive, the cultivation of which would be attended with the happiest effects.

The Bishop of *Durham* spoke highly in commendation of the plan suggested by the venerable prelate. He thought it must be attended with the best effects, as the lower orders of the people naturally looked up to the example of the higher; and were such a model adopted by the latter, it would prove that they were determined not to indulge in the luxuries of life, to the injury of the poor. The retrenchment should not be confined to the article of bread. There were a variety of luxuries, which at such times ought to be laid aside by the wealthy, for the accommodation and comfort of the poor.

Lord *Grenville* agreed in the impolicy of proposing compulsory measures in such cases as the present. The propositions alluded to might be attended with good effects; and he believed, that but one sentiment pervaded the House, which was, by every proper and effectual means to avert the threatened calamity; at the same time he thought that frequent and public agitations of the subject would rather tend to increase than to lessen the evil; as by promoting the discussion, they would not remain in the situation from which they set out, but be drawn into a worse; it must, by creating an unnecessary degree of alarm, increase the existing distress. The plan in question was in principle little different from that suggested three or four years ago. There was one point, however, that transpired in the course of the debate, which he could not pass over, namely, that it was necessary by such proceedings as these, to evince to the lower, that the higher orders of society felt for, and were determined to alleviate their distresses. Happily this was not necessary, as there existed in this country a union of interest, an intimacy of connection, between all orders of society, that had convinced all that their interests and happiness were founded on the same basis, and were to be promoted by the same means. Such a calamity as the present was felt more or less by every member of the community.

The Earl of *Romney* thought the scarcity was not so great as was imagined. In Kent the harvest had not failed, though the crops might not have turned out as large as those of 1798. He believed that the scarcity was artificial, and that at this moment there were many granaries and large warehouses full of wheat on the banks of the Thames, the owners of which held them back from the market, in hopes of the price rising still higher. He thought the report superficial and inadequate, and that the committee ought to have carried their enquiries much farther.

The Earl of *Darnley* said, that although he continued of the same opinion, he should withdraw his motion for the order of the day.

The *Lord Chancellor* said, that he approved of the measure brought forward, if some of the terms were so altered as to make it appear the proposition and agreement of those noble lords who signed it. He then took notice of the report of the Commons, and was by no means satisfied

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with its being founded on the opinions of two gentlemen only. That was not the best evidence which might have been obtained. In the course of the last twenty-five years he had had many opportunities of investigating the average price of corn and other provisions, and he had found, as well from those as from the opinion of one of the greatest men this country had produced (Mr. Burke), that the average produce of corn, take the whole country throughout, was not more than twenty bushels an acre.

The Resolution and Agreement were then carried; and a message was ordered be sent to the Commons to acquaint them therewith.

Feb. 27. The Earl of *Darnley* rose to confirm and illustrate the position laid down by him, on the 20th, that the scarcity of grain was greatly exaggerated, and that the alarm that had been sounded on that subject was not only unfounded, but likely to prove highly detrimental to the public. After producing a variety of authorities, from gentlemen farmers, stewards, and surveyors of estates, and others, his lordship concluded thus:—And now, having, as I trust, proved that my former statement was neither made lightly, nor without foundation, I should betray my duty to my country, if I did not strongly express my disapprobation of the exaggerated statements of distress and approaching famine, which have been conveyed to the public by the report of the committee of the House of Commons, and by speeches in this House founded on that report, which, though calculated, in my opinion, to do infinite mischief, rest upon no better foundation than the evidence of Mr. Claude Scott and Mr. Arthur Young. Some noble lords appear forward to take credit to themselves for having sounded this alarm, and especially one (lord Auckland), who, on a former occasion, when I ventured to give my opinion in opposition to his, appeared to assume much merit for those strong statements of impending famine, with which he introduced this subject to the House, because, as he alleged, they were founded in truth. Now to admit, for the sake of the argument, that these dismal forebodings were really founded in fact, does that noble lord think, that, in holding up this frightful spectacle to public view, he acts with policy, with wisdom, or even with humanity? Instead of proclaiming to the affrighted people of this country, that the stock of corn at present on hand is not sufficient to support them till the next harvest, without at the same time being able to point out to them any effectual means of obviating the evil, surely it would have been more consistent with humanity, to have remained silent, at least till such a remedy could be found. But instead of remedying, I contend, that what you have done must inevitably increase the evil, inasmuch as it must tempt all persons, who have corn in their possession, to withhold it from market, in hopes of a better price, which you have told them they have so much reason to expect. But if, as I trust I have proved, the alarm is not founded on fact, I find it difficult to express, in terms sufficiently strong, my opinion of those who lightly, and without sufficient proof, bring forward to public view the hideous spectre of famine, which they fancy is approaching, and by sounding their boasted trumpet of alarm, proclaim to the people of England, that much as they may now suffer by the high price of bread, they must soon expect to suffer much more, and probably have none to eat. They remind me of those magnificent lines of Virgil, wherein he describes the fury of Discord raising her tremendous voice, and terrifying all the surrounding nations, of Italy by the dreadful sound:

"At sæva è speculis tempus dea nacta nocendi,
Tartaream intendit vocem; quâ protinus omne
Contremuit nemus, et silvæ intonuere profundæ.
Audiit et Triviæ longè lacus, audiit amnis
Sulfureâ Nar albus aquâ, fontesque Velini."

The trumpet of approaching famine (sounded, as I contend, without reason) has been heard from the Orkneys to the Land's End. The inhabitants of the whole island have been terrified with it; and mothers who, at the present price of the necessaries of life, find it difficult to maintain their children, tremble at the approach of much greater distress, which you have taught them to expect. But those who have done this say it is with the best intentions, and with a view of remedying the evil. They think they have discharged their duty, by publicly making such statements; and for this I am ready to give them full credit. On the other hand, however, I think I have discharged mine, by endeavouring to confute them;

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and I leave your lordships and the public to judge between us.

Earl Stanhope's Motion for an Address to enter into Negotiations for Peace with France.] Feb. 20. Earl *Stanhope* said:—My lords; not having for several years troubled your lordships with my sentiments on public affairs, I consider it to be my duty, in the present alarming situation of the country, to suggest to your lordships why you ought, and how you might put an end to the war. I have to regret, that the honest, and, I trust, judicious advice I gave early in the war, did not at that time meet your lordship's approbation. If I can prove that the danger arising from a continuance of the war is greater than any that can be reasonably imagined in putting an end to it—if I can satisfy your lordships' that there would be an advantage arising from peace, which it will be impossible to obtain by continuing the contest—if I can prove that you are wasting your resources, even if the war was in certain respects proper, faster than the French republic is wasting her's—I flatter myself I shall have your lordships support. My lords, there is one topic so important, that I cannot wave the discussion of it—I mean the subject of finance. I have in my hand a pamphlet published by Mr. Rose, the secretary of the Treasury, stating a great number of items, several of which I disapprove, but every one of which I will take, so that we shall not have the debate diverted from the principle to detail. The items stated by Mr. Rose I have endeavoured to bring to a point, the better to enable your lordships to understand them. If ministers shall object to any of the items of the secretary of the treasury, it will be a difference of opinion between ministers and George Rose, and not between ministers and citizen Stanhope. My lords, the melancholy fact proved by this book is, that the expenses of the country, after the war, supposing its immediate termination to take place, would amount to 44,354,000*l.* per annum. The items are as follow:

Total Annual Produce of the Land which can be taxed.	
Landlords rents	20,000,000
Tenants profits	6,000,000
Mines, navigation, and timber	3,000,000
Tithes of the superior clergy	4,000,000
Proportions for Scotland, and possessions beyond sea	10,000,000
Total annual produce of the land which can be taxed	£.43,000,000

Annual Taxes after the War, if the War were to end to-morrow.	
Estimate of the peace establishment, as stated by the committee in 1791	16,000,000
Charge incurred during the war, by loans and funding	8,264,000
Increased charges not included in the estimate of 1791 (in consequence of the increase of pay for 18,000 seamen, and of the army; and also in consequence of increased half-pay, &c.)	1,260,000
Additional peace establishment beyond the establishment in the last peace; together with the expense of yeomanry and volunteers	1,330,000
Total of tithes paid by the people	5,000,000
Parochial and county rates	5,000,000
Income tax	7,500,000
Total of taxes per annum	44,354,000
Deduct the total annual produce of the land which can be taxed	43,000,000
Annual deficiency after the war, if the war were to cease to-morrow	£.1,354,000

I have stated the whole produce of the country, and the whole of the taxes. The taxes exceed the income in the proportion I have mentioned; I mean exclusively of the trade of the country. As to the comparative strength of England and France—when I was a member of the other House, I moved for a return, of the number of houses in England and Wales; they appeared to be about 1,000,000; and this fact has been ascertained, that when you want to know the number of inhabitants of a country, get the number of houses, and multiply by 4¼, and you arrive nearly at the true estimate. I, however, multiplied by 5: this gives 5,000,000 for England and Wales, which, with the population of Scotland, makes 6,000,000. Now, then, look to the population of the French republic: I find that, including Savoy and Nice, and all those countries it has conquered on the Rhine, the population of France is from 32 to 33,000,000. In estimating the resources of England and the French republic, I shall deduct what the people of this country pay for parochial and county rates, because I have no information of the exact amount of payments of a similar nature made in France. This reduces our taxes to 39,354,000*l.* and dividing it

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by the six millions of inhabitants in Great Britain, you will find that what the people of this country have to pay in taxes and in tithes will amount to above 6*l.* 10*s.* for every inhabitant. Now I find by Mr. Rose's estimate, that the whole sum paid by the French republic annually to its government is 15,000,000*l.*; consequently 15,000,000*l.* to be paid by 32,000,000 of inhabitants, amounts to less than 10*s.* each; yet we are told that this country, where we pay 6*l* 10*s.* is the best governed country in the world; and France, where they pay only 10*s.* is oppressed by its rulers, distracted in its councils, ruined in its finances, and incapable of defending itself! The next point to which I shall draw the attention of your lordships is, the comparative state of the cultivation of England and France. I have been in several districts in Devonshire, and I find, in that one county, more waste land than there is land altogether in Middlesex. With respect to France, since hunting in the country has been so much diminished, that is, since the revolution, and the overthrow of the feudal system, it has been remarkably well cultivated. What a noble lord (Auckland) says as to the cultivation of France, proceeds upon a misstatement: he tells you there is no corn in France, at least not sufficient to afford any supply to this country, because M. Neckar stated some years ago that France did not upon an average, produce quite corn enough for its own consumption; but he should recollect, that since that period the country has been materially changed, the land has experienced a higher degree of cultivation, and that cultivation has been accelerated by the labour of the women as well as the men. The people of France have been much diminished by emigration and war; therefore it is to be presumed, that with their decreased population and increased state of agriculture, they may have corn to spare for exportation. Besides, look to the rich and fertile countries along the Rhine, that did not belong to France at the time when M. Neckar wrote; and it is very material here to observe, that those fertile countries along the Rhine communicate to Great Britain by water carriage, and that from their not having been able, on account of the war, to carry their produce by sea to other countries, nor to the south of France, there is every reason to think that corn might be procured in great quantities from those countries, to relieve the present alarming scarcity in Great Britain. What I mean to offer as an argument from this is, that if you take the produce of the whole cultivated land of Great Britain, and the whole cultivated land of new France, that is to say, of the whole country, extending from the Pyrenees to the Rhine, and from the English channel to the Alps, to the same market, the amount of the latter would be six times as much as the former; so that the produce of the land of France is upwards of 200,000,000*l.* more than that of England and its dependencies, including also the 14,000,000*l.* stated by Mr. Rose as the balance of trade in our favour. Consequently, giving ourselves all the benefit of our trade, and supposing France to have none at all, still the advantage in favour of the republic is considerably above ten to three. Then, I ask, what ground is there for stating France as a ruined country, and incapable of carrying on the war? Suppose two men of equal income, and one of them does as France does, that is, lives within his, while the other, like England, exceeds it; can these be put in competition with each other, as to whose finances will hold the longer? Besides, if there are two men of equal income, and one pays 6*l.* 10*s.* a year for every 10*s.* which the other pays, is there any comparison between them? Is not the man who pays no tythes more capable of supporting himself than he who does pay them? Then, as to the assistance you can derive from national lands, you have none. Again, suppose two men, one with a clear unencumbered estate, and another with a mortgaged one,—must not the man with the mortgaged estate be first exhausted? And the national debt is clearly an enormous mortgage on the lands of England. Whereas the French, by carrying on the war without borrowing any considerable sum, are in that respect in a much better situation than Great Britain. If this is not palpable, then there is no truth in arithmetic. I assert, that inevitable ruin awaits the country, if you go on with the war. When the people of France are paying 10*s.* a head, and those of this country 6*l.* 10*s.* will it not have a material effect on your manufactures as soon as peace arrives? How can you contend against France, while the price of labour is at so enormous a rate? How is it possible you can prevent her from underselling you in the markets? Depend upon it, whenever by imposing taxes you con-

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trive to raise the price of labour, the French will undersell you after peace is made; and then what becomes of your 14,000,000*l.* the balance of trade in your favour? If the French should be able to undersell you, supposing you were to make peace to-morrow, what must you not expect if this war is to be continued? What but certain ruin to your trade? I should like to know how taxes are to be procured? Where are you to get revenue? Yet we insulted with false statements of the prosperity of this country, and with the flourishing statements of government revenue. There is infinitely more wisdom in the American government, which makes it a boast that its expenses do not exceed 200,000*l.* annually, than there is in the government of this country, which makes it a boast that it is 40,000,000*l.* To talk of national prosperity when the expense of a government is so inordinate, is an insult to common sense. I shall now offer you my reasons for wishing to make, and prevent that dreadful evil which war has introduced into the country in the shape of famine. I agree that it is the failure of the harvest, and the very short crops, that produced the scarcity, but the extent of that calamity is occasioned by the war; and, my lords, for my opinion I will give you seven reasons: 1. Provisions are wasted and consumed in time of war, to a greater extent than they are in time of peace. 2. There is a considerable decrease in the operations of agriculture, by taking so many men from their labours in the field to fill up the army and navy. 3. Because the war has been a check throughout the kingdom, to the cultivation of waste lands. 4. The effect the war has towards producing the failure of large and extensive commercial houses, for, had it not been for the war, there would have been more private capital in the country, which might have been employed in procuring corn from abroad. 5. It is most clear, that the public revenue, which has been prodigally expended in expeditions, in building barracks, and in subsidizing foreign powers, might have been employed in purchasing a sufficient stock of corn, and in building granaries to store it. My lords, I know something of granaries, in consequence of having been formerly at Geneva, where, in time of cheapness, they lay their corn in granaries, in order that, when they are visited by scarcity, they may be enabled to sell it to the people at a cheap rate. You will ask how they preserve it? I will tell you. There are means of drying wheat made use of in Geneva by which they can keep it fifty years; when you dry it and expel the moisture from it, it is no longer capable of corruption. I have ate bread made of wheat that has been kept that time, and it has been extremely palatable, as much so as any other. 6. War renders it necessary you should take up, for the conveyance of troops, ships that ought to be employed in bringing corn from abroad; there are plenty of places in the Netherlands whence you could have a supply. And, 7. This unfortunate war has shut up the ports of those countries that could supply you; by peace you will open them and restore plenty. My lords, I love the true principles of the constitution: but I know it has its abuses, and I wish to see those abuses corrected. I am come down to this House, to implore your lordships most earnestly, and upon my knees, to put an end to the calamities of this cruel war, to preserve the country, and to save the people. Ministers cannot say these things were not foreseen. I desire to have the protest of earl Stanhope, of February 1st 1793, read. [The Protest was then read.*] What I prophesied has come to pass; and I repeat, that if you continue the war, you will put the necessaries of life beyond the reach of the poor. There will be a general cry for peace if you do not make it. After some further observations, the noble earl concluded with moving,

"That an humble Address be presented to his majesty, earnestly to represent to his majesty, that a state of war is contrary to nature; but that a state of peace is always for the interest of the people in all countries:

"And farther to represent to his majesty, that the shedding of human blood, and the laying of countries waste, when it can possibly be avoided, are utterly repugnant to the first principles of morality and of humanity, and to that duty which every man owes to his fellow men; but that the establishment of a pacific system, founded upon principles of moderation and justice, ought to be the constant policy of a wise and enlightened nation.

"And further to represent to his majesty, that the present war against the

* See Vol. 30, p. 330.

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French republic has been expensive beyond the example of any former war, and that it has produced an enormous increase of the National Debt, a most heavy accumulation of taxes, and an alarming and consequent increase in the price of almost all the necessaries of life.

"And further to represent to his majesty, that this House is fully convinced, that peace is essential to diminish the present scarcity of corn; for that, although scarcity may be produced by scanty crops, yet that the danger of impending famine is chiefly to be attributed to the war.

"And further to represent to his majesty, that it is a duty which this House owes to the British nation, from every motive the most cogent, and from every principle the most sacred, strongly to dissuade his majesty from attempting the restoration of the line of princes of the Bourbon family to the throne of France; and most earnestly to request his majesty to be pleased immediately to take the proper measures to negotiate for peace with the French republic."

The *Lord Chancellor* left the woolsack, not, he said, to observe upon any of the arguments used by the noble earl, but to take notice of a matter which was in the highest degree irregular. The noble earl had caused to be read from the Journals, an extract from a protest of his own, as an illustration of his argument, and the ground of his motion. Nothing could be more contrary to the forms of the House than such a proceeding; undoubtedly it was the privilege of every noble lord to put on the Journals, whatever he thought proper to sign with his name as his protest; but it was extremely irregular to call for any part of a protest to be read in a debate, from the Journals, as if the privilege of entering it made it wear the authority of the proceedings of the House itself. Had it been any other noble lord's protest, he should have immediately prevented its being read; but the reason why he had not taken notice of it at the proper moment was, because he did not feel it necessary to interrupt (what their lordships had heard, sometimes with good humour, sometimes with gravity, but throughout with great patience) the visitation of God, which their lordships had that night witnessed.

Earl *Stanhope* contended, that he had not been out of order in reading an extract from his own protest. He recollected a protest being ordered to be read, and no objection whatever had been made to it.

The question being put, the House divided: Contents, 2; Not-contents, 26. The Contents were earl Stanhope and lord Camelford.

Earl Stanhope's Protest against the Rejection of his Motion for an Address to enter into Negotiations for Peace with France.] The following Protest was entered upon the Journals:

"Dissentient,

1. "Because I have uniformly considered the war against the French republic as both unnecessary and unjust.

2. "Because I feel revolted at the idea, that the blood of my fellow men is still to continue to be spilt for an unjustifiable object; namely, in order to endeavour to re-establish in France the ancient despotism, and to restore to the throne the Bourbon family, the hereditary princes of which race have, for so many centuries past, disturbed the peace of Europe, and threatened the liberties of this country.

3. "Because this war against the French republic has already operated in a very powerful and dreadful manner to increase the present scarcity of corn in Great Britain; first by the enormously increased consumption and waste arising immediately from the war; secondly, by the decrease of agriculture, arising from so many thousands of men having, for some years past, been taken from the plough, for the navy, army, and militia; thirdly, by the check which it has given to the making of canals, the draining and the flowing of lands, and sundry other agricultural improvements; fourthly, by the failure of many commercial houses, and embarrassment of others, by which means much private capital has been diverted, which might have been employed in procuring corn from abroad; fifthly, by the public funds having been diverted to the purposes of war, unsuccessful expeditions, and foreign subsidies, and to the building of barracks, which might and ought to have been usefully employed in building public granaries, and in providing corn for the people; sixthly, by diverting such an immense quantity of shipping from being employed in importing corn into this country; and seventhly, by depriving this nation of the immense advantage of receiving corn from several of the most fertile countries in Europe, especially from

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the Netherlands and other parts of France.

4. "Because the continuance of the present war is in the highest degree alarming, since the effects which must inevitably arise from the further prosecution of the war, when added to the baneful effects which it has already produced, threaten this nation with absolute want and famine; the more especially if another unfavourable harvest should still more increase those calamitous effects which the persevering in this war must, of itself, unavoidably produce. And,

5. "Because my mind is seriously impressed with the present most extraordinary and awful situation of Great Britain, which, with an immense navy, immense credit, immense trade, and the seas at her command, is now at the eve perhaps of famine, and of all its consequent horrors, whilst France, a neighbouring republic, without commerce, and which has been by his majesty's ministers attempted to be inhumanly starved by a blockade, is now, by means of its internal resources alone, possessed of the most essential necessaries of life.

(Signed) "STANHOPE."

Proposal and Resolution respecting the Renewal of the Bank Charter.] Feb. 21. The House having resolved itself into a committee of the whole House, on the act for establishing an Agreement with the Bank, and the following Proposal being read, viz.

To the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain, in Parliament assembled. The Governor and company of the Bank of England humbly propose,

"That, in consideration of the advance of three millions sterling, in the manner for the period, and upon the terms] herein aftermentioned, they be continued a corporation, with the sole power and privilege of banking for the term of 21 years, from the 1st day of August 1812, with all abilities, capacities, powers, authorities, franchises, immunities, exemptions, privileges, profits, emoluments, benefits, and advantages, which they now have, possess, or enjoy by virtue or in pursuance of their charter, or of any act or acts of parliament, or of any employment by or on behalf of the public: redeemable, nevertheless, after the expiration of the said extended term of 21 years from the said first day of August 1812, on one year's notice, and the re-payment of all the principal money and interest which shall be then due and owing to the said governor and company upon all such tallies, exchequer orders, exchequer bills, parliamentary funds, or other government securities, which they shall have remaining in their hands, or be entitled to at the time of such notice to be given as aforesaid; the said governor and company continuing a corporation, with an exclusive power of banking, notwithstanding such notice given, until all the money due to them as aforesaid shall be duly paid. That, in consideration of the above proposed extension of their charter for 21 years, and a grant of their other privileges, employments, advantages, and immunities abovementioned, the said governor and company are willing to advance the sum of three millions sterling for the public service, to be paid on such days during the present year, and in such manner, as parliament shall direct and appoint: the re-payment thereof to be secured by exchequer bills, to be made out at the time of such advance, by virtue of an act to be passed in this session of parliament, and to be made payable at the expiration of six years from the date thereof, without interest; the said exchequer bills to be charged and chargeable upon the first aids or supplies which shall be granted by parliament, for the service of the year 1806, and, in case sufficient aids or supplies should not be granted by parliament for that purpose before the 5th day of April 1806, the same to be charged and chargeable upon and to be repaid out of the consolidated fund: Provided, That the said governor and company shall have the option of being repaid the said sum of three millions at any time before the expiration of the said term of six years, in case the price of the three per cent consolidated annuities shall be 80 per cent or more, upon giving six months notice for that purpose to the lords commissioners of his majesty's Treasury; and upon such repayment, the said governor and company shall deduct or allow a discount to the public at and after the rate of six pounds per cent per annum on the sum repaid for such part of the said term of six years as shall then remain unexpired. Sealed by order of the Court of Directors, the 13th of February 1800.

(L. S.) "ROBERT BEST, Sec."

Mr. *Pitt* said, that the advantages which the public would derive from the renewal of the Bank charter would be, the possession of three millions for six years without interest; the value of which would be between 6 and 700,000*l*. This was the mere gain upon dry calculation, but not the actual gain; for, in the first place, whether the charter of the Bank were renewed or not, this money would be wanted, together with a much larger sum: what interest was to be paid upon the rest of it must depend upon the terms on which the loan was made; nor could he say what the probable prices would be when this sum of three millions was to be replaced, or when it should begin to bear

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interest because it could not be said that would be a period of peace or war. Gentlemen would naturally ask, whether it was right thus far to anticipate the solvency of the Bank under the recent experience of its having been unable to make its payments in cash? But it was so far from being an objection, in his opinion, that it decided his mind in favour of the measure now to be proposed for the renewal of the charter. The public had derived great advantages to manufactures and to commerce by the aid of the Bank, and no doubt would do so again if any similar pressure should be felt. Many thought that much calamity would follow the stoppage of payment in cash by the Bank; but that event had, among other things, convinced us of the good sense there was in placing such general confidence in the Bank, and of the real solidity of that institution. We had seen that our commerce and manufactures, instead of diminishing, had increased during the period of the restriction of payment in cash; which commerce and manufactures he had the satisfaction to observe, were still increasing to a degree unknown to our history; and therefore we ought now, with more confidence than ever, to continue the exclusive privileges of the Bank. These were the grounds on which he should move, "That it is the opinion of this committee, That it is expedient to continue to the Bank of England, for a further term of 21 years, the privileges secured to them by an act, passed in the 21st of his present majesty, on the conditions contained in the Proposal made by the governor and company of the Bank of England for that purpose."

Mr. *Tierney* wished to know whether the proposal for this renewal first came from the chancellor of the exchequer to the Bank, or from the Bank to the right hon. gentleman?

Mr. *Pitt* said, the proposal was first made by him to the Bank directors; was then submitted by them to the consideration of a court of proprietors, who having approved the same, it came back to him; and, from that time, he and the Bank directors had acted together.

Mr. *Tierney* said, he knew these parties agreed very well, and acted together, and that this was not the first instance of their doing so.

The question was carried; and the resolution was reported and agreed to by the House.

Debate in the Commons on the Budget.] Feb. 24. The House having resolved itself into a committee of Ways and Means,

Mr. Chancellor *Pitt* said:—Sir, I shall not detain the committee with any preface to the account of the Supplies which have been already granted, or that remain to be granted, for the service of the current year, and of the Ways and Means for defraying the same, but shall proceed to state generally, the sums under the several heads of which those accounts consist. There have been granted, and there remain to grant, under the head of

SUPPLY.

Navy		£.12,619,000
Army ordinaries	8,650,000	
—— extraordinaries	2,520,000	
Making together		11,370,000
Ordnance		1,695,000
Miscellaneous Services		750,000
Interest paid for sums raised by Exchequer Bills; discount for prompt payment; and sums paid to the Bank for receiving and paying contributions, and for other services not included in the supply of 1799, but which were paid out of the monies granted for the service of that year		816,000
Deficiencies of the grants of 1799		447,000
Deficiency of the usual grant of the land and malt tax		350,000
EXCHEQUER BILLS.—In consequence of the tax upon income, credit was taken in the ways and means of last year for 10,000,000*l.* under this head; but in the estimate made of its probable produce, after the modifications which were made of the tax, I reckoned upon no more than, 7,500,000*l.* According to the paper on the table, gentlemen will see that the amount of it is likely to be only 6,200,000*l.* From the number of exchequer bills issued on the credit of this tax, there will be to be paid off about		2,500,000
In like manner, exchequer bills were issued on the credit of the Aid and Contribution act of 1798, and which exceed the produce, making a charge which must be provided for, of		1,075,000
In like manner, a vote of credit was given last year for 3,000,000*l.* to be provided for in the ways and means of this		

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year. It is my intention to vote for a like sum to be charged on the ways and means of the year 1801; but in the mean time, for the sake of regularity, I must include it here as an article of supply 3,000,000

Subsidies.—The probable amount of the subsidies will be 2,500,000*l.* exclusive of the sum to be paid for the maintenance of the Russian troops now in the British dominions, which may be about 500,000*l.*, so that I shall state the whole of the subsidies at 3,000,000

Annual grant towards the fund for paying off the national debt 200,000

Extraordinary services to which we may be subject, say 1,800,000

This would make the total of the supply for the year 1800..... 39,500,000

Ways and Means.

I now come to the ways and means which are to meet this supply.

Land and Malt	£.2,750,000
Lottery	200,000
Exports and Imports	1,250,000

Tax on Income.—This great and substantial source of our finance will apparently produce no more than 6,200,000*l.* It will hereafter be my duty to propose such regulations as may tend to enforce this duty, and I am convinced, that the committee may look to this tax for a much larger production than it has had in 1799. When gentlemen consider that the tax is new in its principle, and that the means of enforcing the collection were, of course, not well understood, they will readily agree, that by regulating the collection much more may be expected. That it will be augmented to the full extent of my original estimate, I firmly believe. Suppose, however, that with the regulations which will be introduced, it shall produce only the sum of 7,000,000*l.* From this we have to deduct the interest to be paid on the loans for which this fund is in the first instance to be appropriated, viz. 1,663,000*l.* Which leaves us a sum applicable to the service of the year..... 5,300,000

The next article I come to is the Consolidated Fund.—Gentlemen will hear with astonishment that we may safely take the surplus produce of this fund at 5,512,000

Exchequer Bills. — Proposing to issue by a vote of credit the same sum as we pay off, the article is to be placed here as well as on the other side of the account 3,000,000

To be received from the Bank, without interest, for the renewal of their Charter 3,000,000

Loan of the year (exclusive of that for Ireland) 18,500,000

Total of the ways and means for the year 39,500,000

I shall now state to the committee the terms upon which I have been able to contract for the loan of 18½ millions. That which is raised here for the service of Ireland will, of course, be provided for in that kingdom. The terms are, for every 100*l.* in money the contractor is to have 110*l.* of 3 per cent consols, and 47*l.* of 3 per cents reduced. Early in the day the consols were at 61, and the reduced at 61¾. Taking them at this price, the terms would be as follow:

£.110 of 3 per cents consols at 61	67	2	0
47 ditto Reduced at 61 15	29	0	4
Discount for prompt payment ..	2	16	7
So that for every 100*l.* in money they agreed to take	98	18	11

In this view of the contract it was surely a most advantageous bargain, but in the course of the day the stocks rose to 62, and in that view of the market the terms would stand thus:—

£.110 of 3 per cents consols at 62 would be	68	4	0
47 ditto Reduced 62 15	29	9	10
Discount	2	16	7
Making.....	100	10	5

The gentlemen, in this view of the bargain, agreed to lend their money to the public for a bonus of 10*s.* 5*d.* Let us look at it in another way. The total amount of the interest to be permanently paid by the public on each 100*l.* is 157*l.* of stock, at 3 per cent. 4*l.* 14*s.* 2¼*d.* So that in the eighth year of the war we have been able to raise the necessary supplies at less than 4¼ per cent.

I now come to the permanent charge which is to be imposed on the public by this loan. I propose to charge the tax upon income with the interest of 13,500,000*l.* There remains then, only the interest of 5,000,000*l.*, for which I have to provide by taxes; namely, 313,500*l.* The first tax, I shall propose, is, a duty of 5 per cent on all teas above

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2*s.* 6*d.* per lb. I estimate this tax at 130,000*l.* The next article of taxation which I mean to propose is on British and foreign spirits. The proposed duty on the home made spirits is 1*d.* on the gallon of wash, or 5*d.* on the gallon of spirit; and the same proportionate duty to be laid on all kinds of foreign spirits. I estimate these duties to produce:—Home made spirits, 100,000*l.* Foreign spirits, 120,000*l.*: making together 350,000*l.*, which is more than the sum wanted.—Mr. Pitt concluded by saying, that he needed not to add any thing to a statement so highly satisfactory, which proved to the committee, the growing prosperity of the kingdom, and our ability to persevere in the struggle until we could obtain a safe and permanent peace. He then moved his first resolution.

Mr. *Tierney* said, that with respect to the revenue, he was extremely glad to find it was in so prosperous a state. It certainly had exceeded his most sanguine expectations; and if we had good reason to believe that it would continue under a peace establishment, it would be a subject for triumph. The right hon. gentleman said, he intended to bring forward certain regulations for the better collection of the income tax. What these were to be he had not hinted. Would he expose every species of property to the same mode of collection, and to the same publicity? One of the objections which he (Mr. T.) had formerly urged against this tax was, that it could not be put in execution without great inequality and vexation. As to the loan, he agreed that the terms were favourable to the public: he could not admit, however, that this circumstance was a decisive proof of the prosperity of the country; it was no less a proof of the extravagant spirit of speculation which prevailed.

Mr. *Jolliffe* said, that we were told, when the income tax was imposed, that it would only last with the war; but we were now employing it to pay the interest of a debt which we were contracting, and he feared much that it would be next to perpetual.

The several Resolutions were then put, and agreed to.

Debate on Mr. Tierney's Motion respecting the Restoration of Monarchy in France.] Feb. 28. Mr. *Tierney* rose to make his promised motion respecting the Restoration of Monarchy in France, and said:—Sir, from the recollection of what is past—from all I know of the situation of this country—from what is known, indeed, to every man, not only of the situation of this country, but of the whole of Europe, I conceive myself called on to bring the House to a definitive vote as to the genuine object and the real principle of the war in which we are engaged. His majesty's ministers have been called on, times out of number, to name what is the actual object for which they contend. Nothing distinct and conclusive is to be drawn from them on this point. They attempt to define it; but they rather croud the question with incongruous explanations, than satisfy and convince any thinking mind. We have heard them asked, if this was a war for the restoration of monarchy in France; and the answer has been, that that most undoubtedly is nearest the thoughts of his majesty's ministers. But we have again heard it denied, that the inference is fair, from any thing the hon. gentlemen have said, that the war is carried on for the restoration of monarchy in France. For myself I believe in my conscience it is carried on for no other purpose. I have been told it is carried on for security. I do not perfectly understand what gentlemen mean by security. They may think that a war of security, which I consider a war of insecurity; they may think that a good cause, which I consider a most cruel contest. Certainly, nothing can be a better ground of war than security. But it would be just as plausible for Spain to declare, that she will not make peace with us until we give up Gibraltar, because the possession of Gibraltar may be necessary to the security of that nation; or in us, on the other hand, it had been as just to insist on the surrender of Gibraltar when in possession of Spain, because we considered the possession of it by us as necessary to our security. Security may be urged by every nation with equal propriety, as the pretext for continuing expensive and ruinous wars. The chancellor of the exchequer has availed himself of a phrase which undoubtedly sounds well, and is in itself grateful to mankind; but with him, when talking to us of security, it is only using an indirect mode of evading a distinct answer to a most important question. I am afraid, Sir, this language subjects me to some hazard of being misunderstood. I know it has been said, that my object is not the security of this coun-

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try, that I do not exclusively desire to witness the success of measures undertaken to give safety to Europe, but that all I am solicitous for, is the preservation of the republic of France. Such assertions are loose, and it is easy to refute them. There is no man more attached to the monarchy of this country than I am. It is a part of the constitution. It is essential to the existence of freedom amongst us; and the rights of the people are only well guarded while that great branch of our standing polity is endowed with its legitimate vigour, is possessed of its rightful power. My veneration for our monarchy is no fashion that I have adopted for convenience; it is not affectation; it has grown up with me. I am from education and from habit attached to our monarchy. But it follows not, that I am to be in love with the house of Bourbon. I think I cannot revere that house, and preserve my loyalty to the house of Hanover. The interests of the two families are distinct, but not more distinct than they are remote and different. With respect to my motion, the object of it is, to bring the House to a vote on that declaration in the note of lord Grenville, which avows the object of the war to be the restoration of the hereditary line of princes. That paper, Sir, is not to be answered by petulant declamation. The vote of this House disclaiming that rash, and most impolitic declaration, would be an authority that could not fail to satisfy all men; it would pass current throughout Europe as the recorded renunciation, by the British parliament and by the British minister, of the wildest project that ever was cherished by ambition —of the most unjust principle that ever was avowed by any government. Wherever that memorable state-paper has been read with attention, the inference I am sure was inevitable, that his majesty's ministers have no entire object for which they would think it worth the risk to contend, except the restoration of monarchy in France. If that paper has been read with an unbiassed mind, the deduction from it must have been what I have stated. I always wished to hear it avowed in language that the people of all Europe could understand, what was the real object of the war. But never, until the discussion on the subsidy to Russia, did the right hon. gentleman speak out. On a recent occasion, indeed, he thought proper to declare his opinion of the propriety of carrying on the war for the restoration of the Bourbons. In the state paper which I have alluded to we meet with that opinion, and unfortunately it rests there on authority that we are not permitted to disclaim. But if the authority be high, the interest produced in the public mind by the avowal of such sentiments has been ardent. What, then, do I wish for this night? That this House may cancel for ever sentiments which it neither consists with good policy, nor with the rights of nations, to cherish. I wish ministers to agree to a resolution, declaring that the war is not carried on for the purpose of restoring monarchy in France. I must suppose, that, if ministers were sincere in their assertion in that paper, they carry on the war for no other purpose; and until it is retracted, I think you look in vain toward peace. Do gentlemen expect it from the arms of the allies, that France shall be so humbled as to accept on her knees any terms ministers may choose to offer. After seven years of war, it is now felt to be necessary not to protract the possibility of peace. I will not debate with gentlemen the time and the manner of proposing to negotiate; but it becomes us to consider, that in those seven years there has been raised in taxes of one kind and another, 187 millions. I do not desire ministers to hurry to that peace, to court the power of France—but to cancel opinions which I am sure it will be our best policy to abandon for ever. Frenchmen cannot be cordial towards us, with such a note as lord Grenville's circulating through Europe. Instead of dividing, that manifesto has united them. A war for security is indeed a just war. The present may be a war into which we originally engaged as a war of security; but as it now stands, it is neither just nor necessary. To prove that it is not just, I need only remark, that it is carried on for the purpose of restoring the Bourbon family. The note declares enough to make every republican feel, on the one hand, that nothing he can do will restore him to your confidence; and on the other, every royalist must perceive, that he cannot depend on ultimate support from you. The effect of the note is, in fact, either to unite all France so powerfully in her armies, that you must fail in all attempts to subdue her; or to drive the people to such desperation and distraction, that as a settled government, you cannot treat with them. By the restoration, you do not

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get security; and if you fail in the enterprise, what do you do? Why, when you would enter on negotiation with the republic, you cannot begin your work until you have abandoned that declaration. This threat of royalty, for such it really is, is absurd. Will the right hon. gentleman tell us, he wishes to restore the Bourbons, that he may destroy Jacobinism? It was the tyranny of the Bourbons that introduced Jacobinism; and the attempt to restore them will be the means of reviving that now dormant spirit. Jacobinism is remembered in France as a means by which she has gained the great object of all her struggles—an equality of rights; and surely gentlemen do not require to be told, that there are no weapons so formidable against the hereditary rights of princes, as the abstract rights of man. France will coalesce again for her own security. You distract her now; can you expect, even if you do restore royalty, to make a secure peace with a nation divided as she will be in such a crisis? What are we to gain by restoring a weak and feeble monarchy? Do you mean to protect it? You will incur an expense that will prove ruinous. But as an Englishman I do not wish for the restoration of monarchy in France. That unfortunate monarch, the last of her kings, whose death was the cause of this unfortunate war, though a virtuous and amiable prince, did as little for the security of the peace of Europe as the most despotic and restless of her monarchs. In the American war, a speech of his majesty delivered at the opening of the session of 1778, unfolds, in language truly forcible and descriptive, the character and the policy of the house of Bourbon.—[The clerk here read the speech from the Journals.*]—I mention that speech to show what was the disposition of the court of Versailles at that time; and are not we told in it, that that court was the disturber of the peace of Europe, bringing every calamity on nations; not our insidious enemy only, but open and declared, avowing their support of the Americans. Can, then, any form of government be more dangerous than that which violated the rights of sovereigns, stirred up sedition against governors, and armed and clothed traitors, as they were styled, against legitimate authority. The same spirit actuated the court throughout. Were not their projects against India discovered soon after the peace of 1783? I believe the intercepted letters which opened to us the history of those gigantic projects are at the board of control. In 1787, did not the court of France exert all its powers of intrigue to drive the stadtholder out of Holland? Has not the greatest republic in the world arisen from the ruins of that ambitious house, the house of Bourbon? But the stadtholder has no interest in restoring that family, and I am sure England has not. We may have an interest in destroying the republic, but we should have the same interest in destroying an overgrown and ambitious monarchy. No, says the war secretary; restore monarchy, and you gain security to yourselves. The speech of the secretary of state (Mr. Dundas) was not so bold. He administered the salvo, "that there are changes besides the restoration, with which his majesty would be satisfied." The chancellor of the exchequer who wraps what he says in more words than any other man, if I understood him at all, is to be satisfied with nothing without the restoration of monarchy.—[Here Mr. Pitt appeared to dissent.] A fair presumption as the real views of ministers arises from the publications of writers in their pay. I shall produce strong evidence of this sort by quoting a pamphlet of Mr. Bowles, intituled "Reflections on the Political State of Society at the Commencement of the year 1800." This writer must be considered in the pay of government, because he is a commissioner of Dutch prizes; and he strenuously contends, that the restoration of the Bourbon family is essential to the peace and security of Europe. But, there is the strongest evidence of all, to prove the truth of all I have asserted—I mean our treaties with Russia. The forces of that nation continue in our pay; if so, the object of the cabinet of St. James's is the same as that of Russia, the restoration of the Bourbons. Another reason for considering that to be our object, is the presence of the count d'Artois. There is no other person in this country with whom ministers can advise on the object of the war; and they can only consult with him on the means most likely to prove effectual for the restoration of his family. Now, as to that august personage, I have too high an opinion of him to suppose that he would lend himself to consultations that had not that for their object. I cannot see, without disapprobation, our court becoming the

* See Vol. 19, p. 1277.

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focus of the cabals of the emigrants. The people of England are naturally jealous of France, but especially of such cabals.—Putting together, then, all the arguments I have used, does any man suppose the object of ministers is not the restoration of the Bourbons? But does any man believe it practicable? Do you expect all at once to change the nature and property, and to suppress the spirit of equality in France? I do not talk of equality for England. We have a perfect constitution, and with a wise administration might perhaps enjoy all the liberty we are fitted to possess. The equality I talk of is that which in France has succeeded the oppressive inequality that existed under the old government, when if a man, though truly respectable otherwise, acquired his property in trade, it was deemed an insult if he proposed marriage with a woman of a noble family. Do you suppose that, having destroyed that inequality, France will return to the toils and humiliations of the monarchy? And if you should succeed, will it believed that the old monarchy, with all its appendages and trappings, would not be restored? Will it be believed, that that abominable tyranny will not be restored? —But, it will be said that we are to subdue France by force. The force of *Russia*? Russia cannot bring force sufficient. We cannot now send such large armies into the field as we did in the beginning of the contest. We in vain expect to succeed by distracting France in the interior. Against all attempts of this sort we have experience and the evidence of facts, accumulated in a fruitless seven years war. We have seen all kinds of revolutions in the republic, but not one of them has brought back the monarchy. Suppose we fail? The emperor of Russia will go home; we can have no reliance on Germany; we shall be at the mercy of a people we have irritated. With what temper will they treat? To please you, perhaps, they would have removed the "Corsican Adventurer," as you call him, for the sake of peace. And here, I must observe, that it was not worthy of the prime minister of a great nation to descend to personal invective against the first consul. I do not say, that the final object of ministers may not justly be the restoration of royalty; my only desire is, that we should this night record it, as the determination of this House, not to carry on the war with that for its immediate object. I do not ask ministers to change their sentiments of the origin of the war, or to give up their invective against Buonaparté: I ask for a distinct vote, declaratory of a precise object. I move you, Sir, "That it is not just or necessary to carry on War, for the purpose of restoring the Monarchy of France."

Mr. *Jones* could not but approve of the motion. No man more condemned the French revolution, nor bore greater enmity to Jacobinical principles, than he did. He could not, however, approve of the continuance of war for the purpose of reinstating the Bourbon family; a family, by whose misconduct all the horrors of the revolution had been produced. After eight years of expensive war, the propositions of the first consul for peace had been contumaciously rejected; in preference to which, ministers chose to lavish the blood and treasure of this country on the precarious hope of reinstating the expatriated people of France in all their ancient rights and privileges. He did not speak this out of any disrespect to the emigrants; he had known and respected many, and, as far as he was able, some he had relieved. While Jacobinical principles remained, no man supported the war more strenuously than he did; and if they should again revive, he would again be an advocate for the like expedient to prevent their growth; but at present he believed them to be pretty nearly extinct. Ministers had held out as their favorite object the restoration of the ancient monarchy in France; 200 millions had already been spent to accomplish that purpose, and 200 millions more were understood as ready still to be thrown away on that fruitless endeavour. To oppose and depress the Bourbon family, 150 millions had been added to the national debt; and to re-establish them in their lost honours, we have already added to it 150 millions more. Should ministers at last succeed, there would be no better pledge of the good faith or friendship of that House than existed in the days of its prosperity and power. He did not pretend to be the advocate of Buonaparté; he hoped he might prove a saviour of his country, and become a second Washington. Though an usurper, Buonaparté was not the first; nor the first who had benefited his country. Cromwell had been an usurper; yet he advanced the glory of this country, and managed all its concerns, foreign and domestic, in a manner that would have done honour to any

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head that ever legitimately wore a crown. France made peace with this usurper, without once mentioning the line of the Stuarts: so did Holland. He did not see, therefore, why so much should be said about the Bourbons. It had been often repeated, that there was no security in treating with so recent a usurper as the first consul, who was liable daily to be displaced. The protector of England, at the time when he formed treaties with foreign nations, was so insecure in his new eminence, that he always wore a coat of mail; and there was even a book published against him, called, Killing no Murder. This, however, threw no impediment in the way of national negotiation. The House should pause, therefore, before they wasted any more the resources of this country in consequence of any such punctilio as this. Grant, that Buonaparté was an usurper, and had waded 'thro' slaughter to a throne;" yet it was not the duty of ministers therefore "to shut the gates of mercy on mankind." The country at large were weary of the war; and its chief advocates were only to be found among contractors and placemen.

Mr. *John Eliot* said, that the question for the House to decide was not, whether it was just or necessary to carry on the war, for the restoration of the house of Bourbon. If that were the true view of it, he would have no hesitation to declare, that an attempt to impose a government on an independent country was both unjust and unnecessary: and this principle he would extend even to France herself, though her conduct, ever since the revolution, had been hostile to the government of every other nation. But the real question was, whether it was necessary to come to any parliamentary declaration of this principle under all the circumstances of the moment? What proof was there, that the people were filled with alarm at the recent proceedings of government, or that they had ceased to confide in that House for the direction of their interests? Where were the petitions which expressed such disquietude and distrust? The House had clearly and distinctly defined its object, on our part, to be security; and to that object they still adhered. If the people of England were, indeed, to read only the passage of the note in reply to the French overtures, which the hon. gentleman had quoted, they might be induced to misconstrue the views of government; but if they read the very next paragraph, they would be convinced that neither ministers nor the House had stated the return of peace to depend on the restoration of the Bourbons. It was contrary to the practice of the House to come to any resolution founded entirely upon abstract principles; and no necessity had been urged to induce them to depart from their accustomed rule of conduct, on that ground. He would therefore move, "That the other orders of the day be now read."

Lord *Hawkesbury* said, it gave him great pleasure to follow his hon. friend, of whose motion he most heartily approved. The House unquestionably had the right of active control over the conduct of ministers; and if they saw any thing which they considered to be wrong in their conduct, they had the right of petitioning the crown to remove them. The hon. mover had set out by assuming that we were at war, for the express purpose of restoring the Bourbons to the throne of France; and that ministers would not come to any definitive confession upon the subject. In answer, he need only refer to lord Grenville's letter —he need only refer to the many debates which had already taken place on this question, in every one of which the hon. gentleman might have heard the most distinct avowals, that we were not warring for the restoration of monarchy in France, but that we were contending for our own security. However desirable that object might be, it was not the one for which alone we were carrying on the war. When he said this, he was not making any new declaration of the professions of their faith. In the autumn of 1793, the same principles were avowed. In the declaration issued by his majesty at that time*, he calls upon the people of France to endeavour to re-establish their monarchy, as the best pledge they could give of security for surrounding nations; yet at the same time he declares, that he did not require this as the exclusive means; but if they adopted any other form of government which should be capable of preserving the relations of peace and amity, he should be ever ready to enter into treaty with them. This was the language also which had been held during every period of the war—that we were not fighting for the restoration of the monarchy, but for

* See Vol. 30, p. 1057.

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our own safety and security. The hon. gentleman next said, that this was the only distinct object which ministers stated as the means of peace. Was not this the only object that could be stated with precision? For, although there might arise many combinations of circumstances and situations in France, which would also enable them to preserve the above relations with other nations, the effect of these combinations and their durability could only be known, to use the language of lord Grenville's note, "by experience and the evidence of facts." Let the House attend to what had already passed in France: let them consider the various changes which had already taken place; there they would see that ten revolutions had set up as many different governments; not one of which was capable of maintaining the relations of peace and amity with other nations. Let them view the successive scenic changes in their farce of government, and remark, that not one treaty had ever been observed by any of the ephemeral powers holding a momentary rule. Let them look at their conduct to the rest of Europe; let them look still farther, and see the same principles in all their native energy extended to other quarters of the globe, then let them ask themselves, whether it would be wise or prudent to trust to the inclination or capability of such a government to maintain the accustomed relations of peace and amity, without the solid test of experience and the unerring evidence of facts? Whenever such a form of government should arise, there would be no obstacle on our part to the restoration of peace. If, therefore, there was no occasion for coming to this resolution, the next question was, how far such an event as the restoration of monarchy in France would be a desirable event? He could not conceive how gentlemen, possessing correct ideas of justice and moral action, when applied to other cases, could possibly so far vary from themselves as not to feel that a desirable event. When they reflected upon a nobility plundered and degraded—a clergy not only plundered, but famished and murdered—why did they not also think that they ought to have their property restored, and the criminals punished, equally as in the case of crimes on a smaller scale? Not only humanity required this, but justice exacted it. If the thing was practicable, he knew no principle upon which it should be neglected. We were, however, told, that the restoration would not be desirable for this country; and, to support that assertion, the hon. gentleman had adverted to the former conduct of the house of Bourbon. He had been led to look into the history of the wars between this country and France from our Revolution down to the revolution in France. In the space of 100 years we had been at war 38 years with France; in which wars justice was invariably on our side. Every man must wish that the succeeding century should not produce so many years of discord; but, taking into consideration the unforeseen contingency of human affairs, he could not hope that we should pass happier years. When he considered the improvements of that century—when he reflected upon the increase of wealth within the same period—the mildness of governments even those of despotic structure—and the humanity with which even wars were conducted—he could not find in an equal period so much of human happiness, and so little of human misery, in any age of the world. If we looked to former periods of the world, did we there find no calamity? In the century preceding the last, we had little war with France; but we then had equal apprehensions from Spain. "Yes, but the hon. gentleman would say, these were kings, and such was their ambition? Had, then, republics no ambition? Let us look back to the ancient republics; what did we there find but ambition and a lust of power? If he were directed to look at the conduct of the republics of Switzerland, Genoa, Venice, he would in reply say, look at the elector of Brandenburgh; look at Bohemia and other monarchies. The true reason in both the latter cases, why they were not ambitious was, because they were not powerful. All powerful states were ambitious, whether they were republics or monarchies; therefore this was no argument against the restoration of the French monarchy. We were, perhaps, the only exception of a great and powerful state, which did not seek to aggrandize itself at the expense of justice and morality. The only difference between the ambition of princes and republics was, that in the first case it was personal, and in the latter a popular, and therefore a more dangerous principle. This being so, he wished the House to reflect whether the restoration of the Bourbons could be attended with so much danger to this country! did they

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think that any other order of things could give more security to this country?—least of all could they think that the present order of things in France promised either secure or permanent peace to this country. Some gentlemen had said, that their principles were changed. A change had taken place, it was true: but what sort of a change?—a military usurpation, carried by the point of the bayonet, and establishing a government, whose only existence depended upon military exploits. Was this an order of things to look to for permanent and secure peace?—The hon. gentleman had also alluded to the interference of the court of France in the contest with America. He felt upon that occasion as every man in the country, not excepting the French royalists did. He never heard one who did not consider that conduct as unjust and impolitic; and they all agreed in asserting, that thence originated the seeds of their own revolution. The hon. gentleman had stated this to have happened during the reign of one of the mildest princes of the Bourbon race: and he (lord H.) knew from good authority, that that prince, in his misfortunes, consoled himself, not only that he did not approve of that conduct in his minister, but that he had opposed it with all his personal influence. All ideas of danger from the monarchy were preposterous and absurd, compared with what we had been suffering during the last ten years from the fury and madness of the republicans. No person who contemplated the course of events in the world, but must wish to see the situation of Europe placed upon its old foundations. Gentlemen must know, that the system that had prevailed for a century and a half could not be deranged without great and various dangers and evils to the people concerned; and that the necessary consequence of new modelling so extensive a system must lead to many wars, in which we most probably must be led, from a consideration of our interests to take a part. The house of Bourbon must desire to see the old system of Europe re-established; the modern government of France, on the contrary, must have different interests and inclinations. Another principle also induced him to wish for the restoration of monarchy—he meant the re-establishment of religion. He was not one of those who thought that religious opinions should be severely restricted or persecuted. It was the opinion of ancient philosophers that no great state could exist without a religious establishment. Modern days had produced philosophers pronouncing other and contrary doctrines. The experiment had been tried in France; and what had it produced? Scenes of horror and dismay. While he was urging this, he might be told, that we had seen the conduct of christian princes such as to evince that they little regarded the dictates of religion. True, we had; yet religion had some influence upon them, not only in making them veil their conduct, when bad, from others; but it also sometimes induced them to palliate their conduct to themselves. Religion had that influence upon them, that they were ashamed to contemplate even their own bad deeds in their native deformity. Under these circumstances, he felt it was a heavy curse to find a great nation without any religion, but delivered up as the French were, to the horrors of impiety and atheism. He did not state this as an argument, that without religion we could not hold any intercourse with them; but we must at least have the evidence of facts and the test of experience, before we could with safety trust them. Now, with respect to the practicability of the measure: upon that subject no man could speak with positiveness; but from one circumstance he augured well. The present government of France stood upon no principles. The former governments, bad and dangerous as they were, were yet founded upon republican principles; but the present had nothing to support it. There was not a man in France, whether royalist or republican, that could possibly be attached to it; and the French nation must see, with regret and indignation, their rulers deposed by an artful and daring Corsican adventurer. If that government was destroyed, whatever form might succeed it, if it were once capable of maintaining the relations of peace and amity, he believed the administration of this country would most readily enter into treaty with it. But his opinion most clearly pointed out to him, that the best ground of hope for permanent security would be in the restoration of monarchy.

Mr. *W. Bouverie* confessed himself alarmed at what had fallen from the noble lord. He did not think that we were at war for the restoration of religion in France; at least he could not see that the restoration of the Bourbons was sure to bring with

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it the restoration of religion. We were also at war, it seemed, for the sake of humanity, because justice and humanity told us that we should restore to the emigrants their property, and to the French clergy their former livings. He would never consent that English blood and treasure should be lavished away for such purposes.

Mr. *Yorke* said, that it would have been a fairer mode of proceeding in the hon. mover, if he had first taken the sense of the House on the question, whether the war was carried on for the restoration of the Bourbons, and had then moved, that it was neither just nor necessary to continue it for that purpose. He had always supported the war, on the ground that it was entered into for self defence; and he would vote no longer for its continuance than until a reasonable security could be obtained, whether it arose from the restoration of the Bourbon family, or any other event. That the administration of this country entertained no views of aggression against France, was evident, from the fact, that in 1792 they had actually reduced the disposable force of this country to about 9,000 men. He agreed, with the noble lord, as to the desirableness of restoring the house of Bourbon, though it would neither be just nor necessary to carry on the war for that object alone.

Sir *G. P. Turner* said, he should continue his countenance to ministers, until they had succeeded in bringing about a secure and honourable peace.

Mr. *William Smith* said, that having closely attended to the arguments of the noble lord, he confessed he was not surprised that they should have produced on any gentleman's mind, an effect opposite to that for which they were intended. The first and main point in debate was, Whether or not the restoration of monarchy in France were the immediate object for which we were now contending? This the noble lord had in terms denied; but he had stated his own wishes for its accomplishment so strongly, and had laboured so much to prove those wishes to be just, wise, politic, and humane, that if he were himself minister, no one could doubt what his own system of measures would be. Let, then, this language be combined with that of the cabinet, and it appeared to him impossible to doubt that this restoration was the point now in view. On what ground was this denied, but that of the qualifying clause in lord Grenville's note, which declared, that "his majesty did not limit the possibility of secure and solid pacification to this mode only." Giving, then, the fullest credit to this declaration, it allowed only a bare possibility that at some future time a peace might be concluded without this restoration, while the preceding paragraph stated in express terms, that for the want of it we would not at this time even commence a treaty, or permit a truce; and that such an event would at once remove all obstacles to negotiation or peace. Could it, then, be maintained, that this was not the object for which we were carrying on the war? For the only other channel through which the present rulers of France could obtain the good opinion of his majesty's ministers, even in such a degree as to be allowed to treat, was pointed out—"experience and the evidence of facts:" and this experience was yet to be gained, and could therefore only be applied at some future period—not to dwell on the absurdity of keeping France at war in order to estimate her ability to maintain the relations of peace. He would proceed to examine the advantages proposed to be derived from the restoration of the Bourbons, as equivalents for the expense to which we were to be put to obtain it. One hon. gentleman seemed to rest his hopes very much on the chastening which the French princes had received from adversity; but did not the conduct of Charles 2nd show how little this was to be relied on? Had adversity taught him private morality or political wisdom? Had it taught him to preserve external faith, or to govern his subjects on the principles of liberty? Was he not at home an arbitrary tyrant, and at the same time the mere corrupt slave and instrument of a despotic monarch, the enemy of his country and of all its interests? Had James 2nd profited more in this school of wisdom? on the contrary, was it not notorious that the profligacy and misconduct of the one was sufficient to make his restoration regretted, while the bigoted folly of the other gave birth to that revolution in which Englishmen gloried. But, had it been otherwise, could it be contended that the House of Bourbon alone was capable of deriving advantage from experience? Might not those who now govern France be supposed able to draw lessons of prudence from the errors of their predecessors, these

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"shades which in such quick succession had flitted away?" We had, however, a better pledge than this of their sincerity, there could be no doubt but that that whole country was desirous of peace; of this disposition the conduct of the rulers furnished the strongest presumption; for, as the most likely means to recommend themselves to the people, and to fix their government, they professed their inclination to become the pacificators of Europe. Laying aside, therefore, the question of experience as equally applicable to both parties, he maintained that, from the evidence of facts, there was sufficient ground to negotiate; and surely it would not have required any superlative talents to turn such a negotiation to our advantage. Instead of cooling the ardour of our allies, it would have afforded an opportunity of strengthening their attachment, by showing to the world our regard for their interest, our resolution not to abandon them, and our determination neither to grant nor accept any other than fair and honourable terms of peace. Had the French refused such terms, they would have been weakened in public opinion: had they accepted them, they must have recommenced the war, if such were their object, under the disadvantage of having all those points to regain, which they had surrendered for the sake of obtaining peace. The noble lord's wish to restore to their possessions and their homes, those who had been unjustly deprived of all the comforts and enjoyments of life, must meet with sympathy in every heart; and if this could be done by any moderate exertion he should be sorry that any man who had been aggrandized and enriched by crime should be suffered securely to revel in the fruits of his rapine; but this might be no easy task for us, and would probably be an additional injury even to the innocent part of France, by engendering another bloody civil war, in which thousands would suffer who had had no share in the guilt; and even if the object were not merely unexceptionable, but highly desirable, yet when he was called on to vote thirty or forty millions for its attainment, it became him to consider the interests and wishes of his constituents, among whom he believed so expensive a project would not be very popular. These however were not the only grounds on which the restoration of the French monarchy was objectionable. With it would probably be restored that train of abuses which had produced the revolution. Had the present claimant of the throne ever renounced his pretensions to its full prerogatives? on the other hand, had not the proclamations of the magnanimous emperor of Russia marked his intention of re-instating him in all the plenitude of despotism? Surely, then, it was important to recollect how that power had been formerly employed, in order to determine how far its re-establishment was calculated to ensure tranquillity to England and to Europe. And could gentlemen disguise from themselves what every page of modern history teemed with? That the ambition and injustice of France, its cruelty and treachery, its violent aggressions on every weaker power, and its insidious attempts to circumvent those whom it was unable to oppress, had been perpetually complained of in the bitterest terms by almost every state between the Mediterranean and the Baltic.—"The common disturber, the common oppressor, the common enemy of Europe, of Christendom of the Protestant Religion," were epithets of reproach which the conduct of Louis 14th drew on him from all quarters: nay, such had been on some occasions the total disregard even of private as well as political morality in his court, that, in 1692, Messrs Louvois and Barbesieux, two of the secretaries, were publicly charged by this government with having engaged in a project for the assassination of king William, for which execrable attempt their miserable instrument was executed. Look next to his successor: not to scrutinize every transaction of his reign, the Journals would speak the opinion of the House respecting him no longer ago than the year 1778.—We should there find France accused of "an unprovoked and unjust aggression on the honour of the crown, and the essential interests of the kingdom, contrary to his most solemn assurances, subversive of the law of nations, and injurious to the rights of every sovereign power in Europe;"—of "a restless and dangerous spirit of ambition and aggrandizement, which has often invaded the rights and threatened the liberties of Europe."—Are heavier charges laid against the republican government? Is Buonaparté loaded with fouler accusations. In regard to the violation of all laws human and divine, he would not hesitate to offer the partition of Poland, as a transaction of which no parallel could be found in the history of France. However atrocious

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other invasions might have been, this beyond them all mocked at every pretence or plea, either of aggression or security: in its progress it committed equal violence on all ranks and parties: the king it insulted and dethroned: of the people it murdered thousands, and riveted on the survivors those chains which were beginning to be loosened: the nobles it either mutilated, exterminated or expelled, for no other crime than that of refusing to acquiesce in the subjugation and dismemberment of their country. If Buonaparté first established and then overthrew the Cisalpine republic, did not the king of Prussia give under his own hand to the unfortunate sovereign of Poland, an explicit approbation of that very revolution, which he and his co-adjutors immediately afterwards made the pretext for annihilating his kingdom. Yet, with the perpetrators of these abominations we made no scruple to connect ourselves in bonds of the strictest alliance. — Again, the seizure of Avignon from the pope had been declaimed against as a characteristic injustice. Was the world, then, ignorant that by the French monarchs it had been taken possession of twice or three times, and restored, not as repentant of an injury, but an object which their magnanimous ambition deemed of too little importance to be worth attention?—The present mode of warfare was another topic insisted on. This was represented as "of a nature long since unknown to civilized nations." If, then, the devastation of the palatinate, and a thousand similar excesses of former times had sunk into oblivion, was the ravage of Hanover by the duke de Richelieu forgotten? Could gentlemen recollect nothing of the king of Prussia's irruption into Saxony—had they forgotten his expulsion of the sovereign, his bombardment of the capital—the severities, even to personal cruelty, employed to extort contributions—and beyond all, his compulsive levies of men throughout the electorate to serve in his army, against their own prince, their own country, their own families? and yet this man was the popular hero of England, extolled from our press and our pulpits, and subsidized from our Treasury! These things he did not bring to view in order to throw unnecessary odium on the character of any prince, or of any government, far less by their example to excuse or even to extenuate any enormities which had been practised by the French during the present contest; but in such a conjuncture, it was absurd to look only at one side, wilfully to forget all past events, to imagine violence and fraud novelties in the records of mankind, and then to allege the misconduct of the French rulers as a sufficient ground for refusing to treat with them, when similar actions had never in former instances prevented negotiation, and when in fact there was not an atrocity alleged against them, for which they might not easily produce a precedent from the history of almost every European power, and especially of that monarchy which some gentlemen, for the sake of its superior excellence, were so anxious to restore.—Another important point, however, remained to be discussed —"the present government was atheistic and the restoration of the Bourbons would restore religion." Religion, according to his idea of it, was not of a nature so frail and temporary, nor rested on such slight foundations as to be capable of being destroyed by a handful of atheists, or to depend on the restoration of monarchy for its existence: neither did he believe that there was really more atheism or less religion in France now, than heretofore: an established system, which was connected in some degree with the monarchy, had indeed been overthrown; but it was notorious that the utmost licentiousness both of opinions and manners had long since pervaded, not only the court and nobility, but the higher orders of the clergy too; and with respect to the mass of the people, there was no reason to believe that their old sentiments or prejudices, be they which they might, were in any great degree obliterated. What was that system, however, which some were so desirous to re-establish—was it not the very hierarchy which for centuries past had been held forth to all Protestants, and to Englishmen in particular, as the object of dislike and apprehension, and, not very long since, even of abhorrence and terror —nor unjustly, when considered as a political religion, and armed with all the strength of a powerful kingdom? As to theological tenets of the Catholic church, he was not very solicitous about them; every man was, in his opinion, entitled to the free and unrestrained exercise of his own judgment on such subjects, to think as he pleased, and to profess what he thought right, without being obnoxious to suspicion or molestation. But, though perpetually declaiming and inveighing against something called Jacobinism, we

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thought it not inconsistent to be the professed champions of Popery, whose political doctrines were jacobinical in the most obnoxious sense of the word: they tended to dissolve allegiance, and destroy every social tie; sovereigns might be attacked on their thrones, and heretics were not entitled to good faith. These principles, too, had been acted on in numberless instances; they had cost France the life of her best monarch, and had sanctioned the most nefarious attempts. Nor did the court of Rome even yet abandon her most extravagant pretensions, or give up one atom of those powers which she had formerly claimed.* But if these were vain terrors, it had yet another character more to be dreaded, as more frequently and more extensively mischievous, its spirit of persecution. Were the horrors it had occasioned in every quarter of the globe no longer remembered? If the revocation of the edict of Nantes was forgotten, did we know nothing of the attempts made to revive those scenes under Louis 15th? He feared no unarmed religionists; but, whether we formed our judgments from theory or experience, he could not but regard it as the grossest absurdity, and most extravagant folly, for Englishmen and Protestants to spend their blood and treasure expressly for the purpose, among others, of re-establishing popery in France, in all its former splendor and ability for mischief. Should it be again replied, that no such objects as he had imagined were really in view, he must answer by the arguments before urged, adding only, that the whole style and tenor of our answer to the French government afforded strong presumptions in his favour; for it could hardly be supposed that men of so much talents as those who composed the British cabinet, would gratuitously indulge themselves in such language as appeared directly calculated to alienate, to irritate, and to disgust, if they had not previously determined against negotiating with the parties. To prevent the ill consequences of a resolution so rash and unwise, was the sole object of his hon. friend's motion.

Lord *Belgrave* said, it appeared from lord Grenville's note, and from every expression of government, that, though the restoration of monarchy in France was the most desirable thing that could happen, still it was not considered as the *sine qua non* of peace; that there were other circumstances, which it was impossible exactly to define or foresee, which would also lead to the same object. The hon. mover had talked of the perfidy of the house of Bourbon; but, supposing the present head of that house disposed to perfidy and ambition originally, was nothing to be learnt from the school of adversity? If it is true, that "sweet are the uses of adversity," then we might expect that Louis 18th would have benefited by such severe instruction. At all events, after his restoration, might not a long interval of peace be fairly expected?—It had been said, that the restoration of monarchy was not practicable: now, upon that he thought it not improper to consider what was the probable disposition of the people of France. In the first point, we must give up all the knowledge we derive from experience, before we can conclude that the French are not heartily tired of the republic, and all the forms of government that have in so rapid a succession, appeared under it: unless we could suppose, that they preferred discord to civil rule, anarchy to order, bloodshed to mildness, misery to prosperity. He would contend that for Buonaparté personally, the French could have no real affection. He appeared to have made treaties only with a view to break them as interest dictated; and his conduct in Egypt was, from first to last, one continued act of perfidy and treachery, and especially to his army. That army he had basely deserted, without orders, at a time of their greatest need, with the assurance that he left them with "great regret," and would return to them "forthwith," at the very moment that he was resolved to leave them altogether to their fate.—If it was not the person of Buonaparté, then, that was the object of satisfaction to France, we must next turn to the constitution he had framed, and

* On the 3rd of March, Mr. Smith took occasion to observe, that he had omitted to say, that the English Roman Catholics had made a complete renunciation of those tenets. Though they were Catholics, they were not, in the strictest sense of the word, papists; for by papists he understood those who believed that a dispensation from the Pope dissolved the civil relation that subsisted between the subject and his prince; tenets certainly the most dangerous, but such as had been unequivocally renounced by the British Catholics; and, therefore, whatever their errors might be, they were perfectly harmless in a political sense.

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see whether it was likely to be the object of affection. He should not detain the House by going into an examination of that constitution: but he thought it material to consider, that, whatever that constitution might promise from its appearance, by the breath of Buonaparté it was raised, by his breath it might be destroyed; it rose with his rise; with his fall it might decline, and therefore the attachment to the constitution could only be in proportion to the attachment to Buonaparté; and that he had shown could not be very strong. As to the constitution he had formed, to show how little he regarded it, he had hardly accepted it, before he violated one of the fundamental articles of it, that which respects the independence of the judges, which appeared the best feature in it. By the bayonet, then, the French consul maintained his power, and by the bayonet the abbé Sieyes might be placed on the throne which Buonaparté now usurped. Among a variety of joint monarchs, France had had a law monarch in the person of Robespierre, a military one in the person of Buonaparté, and might soon have an ecclesiastical monarch in that of Sieyes. A naval monarch would be only wanting to complete the series: but without meaning any disrespect to the other professions, such was the enthusiastic admiration we bore in this country to the naval character, that, debased as the moral character of France was at present, yet he could not suppose a successor would be found among sailors for a Robespierre, a Buonaparté, or a Sieyes, to fill the throne of his murdered monarch. If this picture was at all just, it not only justified the late determination of government and parliament, in regard to treating with a power so fluctuating, but it surely must lead us to think, that of such an insecure and revolutionary state, France must be completely tired, and must be secretly sighing for the return of monarchy. Could there be a more happy and auspicious moment than the present to wish to manifest such a disposition, when an entire reconciliation was said to have taken place between the different branches of the illustrious House of Bourbon, one of which had once given but too attentive an ear to the delusive but destructive theories of the revolution?—There was another consideration, however, namely, whether the French might not wish to see certain unpopular prerogatives, certain droits, relinquished, previous to the restoration of the king of France. Here gentlemen should revert to the experience of history; and it would be found, that there was no difficulty on the part of Charles 2nd in meeting the wishes of his English subjects on that point; and, doubtless, the advisers of Louis 18th would as readily recommend to his majesty to acquiesce in the abolition of any unpopular privileges.—As to the difficulty of restoring monarchy on account of the state of property, no difficulty of that kind was felt at the restoration of Charles 2nd: certain persons had compounded for their estates; but soon after the celebrated declaration of Breda, property reverted, as it were by magic, into the hands of the rightful owners. How long the present revolutionary system would continue, it was impossible to say; but it was clear that France must wish to see it at an end.—The noble lord said, that parliament and the nation had always accorded in sentiment on the subject of the war. As to the prodigious waste of blood, he said, he must deny that. We had, indeed, considerably increased our debt; but, thanks to the unparalleled industry of the country, our resources had augmented in such a manner as to make the debt, however great, comparatively light. As our expenses had been considerable, however, our blood had been spared; and he would not ask a British House of Commons, which was more valuable, British blood, or British treasure.—He would only add, that, however desirable peace might be, war was ever to be preferred to an insecure and discreditable peace. When such a peace could be obtained, as would be felt by all classes of the community to be honourable and secure, then might we with confidence and gratitude return the sword into the scabbard; then might we retire into the bosoms of our families, and resume the occupations of peace, fully compensated for our past sacrifice. And such a peace we should obtain, unless fear seized on the councils, and despair the hearts of the country: but that could never happen; and therefore he looked forward to such a peace at no very distant day, either from the restoration of the Bourbon family, or some other combination of circumstances which might lead to sufficient security, with a humble but sanguine hope, but at the same time with entire resignation to the Supreme Disposer of all human events.

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Colonel *Elford* said he could not agree to this motion, because he did not believe that government was carrying on the war for the purpose of restoring the monarchy of France. In addition to the declaration of ministers, he had documents on which he could rely, which declared, that although the restoration of monarchy was a desirable object, yet it was not a *sine qua non*. As to the argument, that this motion ought to be adopted to calm the minds of the people, he believed the opinion of the people was not different from the opinion of that House, and that the assertion of a difference in sentiment between the people, and the House of Commons upon the subject of the war, was a gross calumny, not on the people, but on the House. He believed the people not only had full confidence in their representatives, but also in the administration of the government.

Mr. *I. H. Browne* said, that the war was not for the restoration of the Bourbons, but for our own defence. The motion, if agreed to, would tend to disarm us of one of our best weapons, and deprive us of the aid of those in France who were attached to the cause of monarchy. He thought the restoration of monarchy desirable, because it would give a greater security than any form of government which we could hope to see rise out of the convulsions of the revolution.

The question being put, that the other orders of the day be now read, the House divided:

Tellers.

YEAS	Mr. John Eliot The Lord Hawkesbury	142
NOES	Mr. Tierney Mr. William Smith	34

So it was resolved in the affirmative.

List of the Minority.

Adair, R.	Jolliffe, W.
Barclay, G.	Keene, W.
Beach, M. H.	Knight, R.
Biddulph, R.	Langton, W. G.
Bird, W. W.	Leicester, sir J.
Bouverie, hon. E.	Lemon, sir W.
Bouverie, hon. W.	Lemon, col.
Brogden, J.	Martin, J.
Burdett, sir, F.	Milner, sir W.
Copley, sir L.	North, D.
Denison, W. J.	Plomer, W.
Hobhouse, B.	Ridley, sir M. W.
Howard, H.	Richardson, J.
Hussey, W.	Robson. R. B.
Jones, J. T.	Sheridan, R. B.
Jekyll, J.	Shakespeare, A.
Stanley, lord	
Western, C. C.	

TELLERS.
Tierney, G.
Smith, W.

Second Report of the Committee of the House of Commons respecting the Assize of Bread, and the Deficiency of the Crop of Grain.] March 6. Lord Hawkesbury presented the following

REPORT.

The Committee appointed to consider of means for rendering more effectual the provisions of an act made in the thirteenth year of the reign of his present majesty, intituled, "An Act for better regulating the Assize and making of Bread;" and who were instructed to consider of the most effectual means of remedying any inconveniences which may arise from the deficiency of the last crop of grain; and empowered to report their proceedings, from time to time, to the House;

Have, since their last report, received additional information respecting the deficiency of the late crops of grain in many parts of the country, particularly in Scotland; the result of which has impressed your Committee with the propriety of suggesting such methods as appear to them most likely to be effectual for diminishing the consumption of corn, for encouraging the importation from abroad, and for bringing into extensive use such substitutes as may supply the place of it; and for this purpose they are desirous of calling the attention of the House to the following points:

1. The expediency of giving a bounty to encourage the importation of corn from the Mediterranean and America.

2. The propriety of individuals reducing the consumption of flour in their families.

3. The propriety of subjecting millers to some new regulations.

4. The adoption of a new table of assize.

5. The encouragement of the use of rice and Indian corn.

6. The encouragement of the growth of potatoes, and other nutritive vegetables.

7. The expediency of procuring a considerable supply of food from the fisheries.

8. The expediency of stopping the distilleries.

1. Your Committee have received information, that considerable supplies of wheat may probably be obtained from the countries in the Mediterranean, and from America, which at the present prices would be imported to very great profit; but as several months would elapse before such supplies could be brought to this country, and as it is possible that during that period the prices of all sorts of grain may fall considerably, particularly if there should be a prospect of a very abundant harvest; and as such a fall of prices might occasion a very great loss to the importers, such

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as took place in the year 1796, your Committee are apprehensive that merchants will not be induced to speculate, unless they receive some encouragement from parliament; they therefore suggest, how far it may be proper to offer such a conditional bounty as may be likely to secure the merchants against any probable losses they might incur in importing wheat or flour from the Mediterranean or America before the month of October. The prices of wheat in the Mediterranean are stated to be from about 50*s.* to 60*s.* per quarter; the prices of flour in America are about 60*s.* the English sack; the insurance, freight, and other mercantile charges, may, in either case, amount to about 33*s.* per quarter, or 30*s.* per sack. If parliament should therefore think proper to provide, that in case the average price of wheat throughout the kingdom, as stated in the Gazette, should fall below 90*s.* per quarter, and the average price of flour should fall below 90*s.* per sack, the difference between the market price and 90*s.* should be made up by a bounty to the importer, it might afford a very considerable encouragement to foreign supply, consistent with the reduction of the prices in the home market.

2. Your Committe have great satisfaction in being able to state, that many individuals, in different classes of life, have already effectually reduced the consumption of bread and flour in their families; and that the saving which has been made in consequence is very considerable, in many instances amounting to one fourth, and in some even to one third, of their usual consumption. If such a practice should become general, it would produce the most beneficial effects. Your Committee recommend, therefore, to every housekeeper, to reduce the quantity of bread used in his family to one quartern loaf per week for each person, which has been found, by experiment, to be sufficient; and likewise, to abstain, as far as possible, from the use of flour for all other purposes.

3. Your Committee have been informed, that considerable inconvenience has been felt, from millers refusing to grind the sorts of flour necessary for making the brown bread; and they are of opinion, that, to remedy this inconvenience, it may be expedient to subject millers to some new regulations.

4. For reasons given in their former Report, your Committee cannot recommend any compulsory law for the use of only one sort of bread, or the grinding of only one sort of flour; but, strongly impressed with the advantage that might result from the use and consumption of bread made of the whole meal or of a great proportion thereof, they think proper to observe, that by the manner in which the assize is now set, the profit of the baker is far more considerable upon the fine wheaten bread, than on that of a coarser quality; and your Committee recommend, therefore, that a new table of assize should be framed, to remedy this inconvenience, and to promote the use of coarser meal.

5. Your Committee have great satisfaction in stating, that a considerable supply of rice and Indian corn may be obtained from America; that, mixed in certain proportions with wheat, they make a most wholesome and nutritious bread; and that the most damaged wheat may not only be used, but rendered palatable by a mixture of rice, which, by repeated experiments has been found to correct the defects of it. This consideration, that much damaged wheat and grain, otherwise unserviceable, may be made into wholesome and palatable bread, by being mixed with rice, suggests the importance of extending to this latter article the same economy as that which is recommended in the use of wheat, and of reserving it as much as possible for the above important purpose.

Your Committee, sensible of the important use of rice at the present moment, are induced to recommend, upon a comparative view of the prices of that article in this country and the other countries in Europe, that a bounty should be given, on the same principle as that with respect to corn, on the importation of rice, which should secure to the importer the price of 1*l.* 15*s.* per cwt. if the market price should fall below that sum. And your Committee likewise submit, whether it may not be expedient that some bounty should also be given, on the same principle, on the importation of Indian corn.

6. Your Committee are of opinion, that it is probable that considerable relief may be afforded, if proper encouragement is given to the growth of potatoes, and other nutritive vegetables; and they recommend therefore to landlords, to permit and encourage their tenants to break up a limited quantity of land, according to the circumstances of the estate, for the cultivation of potatoes and pease: And your Committee suggest, that it may be expedient that provision should be made by law, for a given time, to enable lords of manors, or individuals, or parish officers on behalf of the parish, with the consent of the lord of the manor, to break up a quantity of common land, and to cultivate it with potatoes.

7. It has appeared in evidence before your Committee, that in some parts of Scotland, and in Cornwall, the lower orders of people are consuming at this time great quantities of fish, which make no inconsiderable part of their sustenance; and your Committee understand that a large quantity of Swedish herrings may be obtained from Gottenburgh and the neighbouring ports, at a very reasonable price; they recommend, therefore, that the Swedish herrings should, for a limited time, be imported duty-free. And as an encouragement to our own fisheries, and to increase the supply at the present moment, they suggest the propriety of giving a bounty equivalent to 2*s.* 8*d.* per barrel (if proper regulations can be adopted to provide against fraud) on the cure of mackarel, or of other fish caught in the mackarel fishery, for home consumption;

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and your Committee, under the present circumstances, strongly recommend the distribution of fish as an article of parochial relief, which may be obtained in many parts of the country, in great quantities, at a very moderate price.

8. An opinion being prevalent in many parts of the country, and particularly in Scotland and Wales, that a great increase of food for man might be obtained from stopping the distilleries in England, your Committee thought it their duty thoroughly to investigate this subject. The quantity of barley consumed in the distilleries has been stated by several of the persons engaged in the trade, whose evidence is completely corroborated by that of one of the commissioners of excise, who has delivered in to your Committee calculations on the subject, so nearly agreeing with the accounts given by the distillers, as to satisfy your Committee that they are sufficiently accurate for the purpose of forming their opinion.

It appears that the whole quantity of barley consumed in the English distilleries, amounts only to between 220 and 250,000 quarters annually; that in consequence of the distillers having been allowed the use of sugar at the low duties, the consumption of grain has been very much diminished; that the distillers continue working from the month of November until the middle or end of May; that all that can be wanting to complete their works in the present year cannot exceed 53 or 55,000 quarters; that the distillers were prohibited the use of wheat, the only grain used in the English distilleries besides barley, by an act passed in the month of October last; and that in consequence of the deficiency of the crops in the last harvest, and to remove all dissatisfaction on account of their trade, they entered into an agreement to make use of no barley in their distilleries but what was damaged, or of inferior quality; to which agreement, by the evidence before your Committee, they appear to have strictly adhered. It appears, likewise, that very large numbers of swine and cattle are actually fed from the refuse of the distilleries; and that if they were prohibited from working, the supply of meat would be diminished, or the feeders of cattle and distillers in the neighbourhood of the metropolis would be under the necessity of using, at a great expense, a quantity of grain in feeding their swine and cattle, which, perhaps, would not fall very far short of that which would in the first instance be consumed in the distilleries; and your Committee cannot avoid observing, that in either of these cases, the price of meat must be expected to rise considerably, so as very materially to affect the lower orders of the people, who are now deriving extensive relief in the metropolis, and in many parts of the country, from the establishment of soup shops, and to bear with still greater pressure upon those classes of the community which are immediately above them.

Your Committee have purposely avoided stating the effect which the stopping of the distillery might produce on the revenue, being anxious that no consideration of revenue should interfere, provided the expected relief could really be obtained; but when they consider how small would be the quantity, and how inferior the quality of the barley that could be saved, and the effect likely to be produced on the prices of other articles, and the course of other trades, they cannot see any advantage that would result from it, sufficient to justify your Committee in recommending it to the House.

Your Committee have omitted to subjoin any proposal for prohibiting the use of wheat in the manufacture of starch, conceiving it to be a very inconsiderable object; and being farther informed that measures have been taken to procure a supply of this article by importation from abroad, and that the principal manufacturers have voluntarily relinquished the use of it: they, however, think, that, in justice to them, the disuse should be made general by a prohibition.

Your Committee have great satisfaction in stating, that the measure adopted by the legislature, for prohibiting the sale of any bread which had not been baked twenty-four hours, has already produced the most beneficial effects. By the declaration of the Master, Wardens, and Court of Assistants of the Company of Bakers, annexed to this Report, it appears that the consumption of bread in the metropolis is reduced, in consequence of it, at least one sixth part.

Proceedings in the Commons relating to the Deficiency of the last Crop of Grain.] March 6. The House having resolved itself into a committee of the whole House to consider further of the Report respecting the Assize of Bread, and the Deficiency of the last Crop of Grain, the following Resolutions were moved by lord Hawkesbury, and, after a short debate, agreed to: viz. "Resolved, 1. That it is the opinion of this committee, that, whenever the average prices of wheat, and fine wheaten flour, ascertained and published in the London gazette, under the authority of any act or acts of parliament, shall be less than 90*s.* per quarter of wheat or sack of wheaten flour, respectively, there shall be given, on every quarter of wheat, and on every barrel of fine wheaten flour, which shall be imported into Great Britain, from any port of Europe, South of Cape Finesterre, or from any port in the Mediterranean, or in Africa, or from any of his majesty's colonies in America, or the United States, before the 1st of October 1800, a bounty equal to the difference between such average prices in the London

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gazette, and 90*s.* per quarter of wheat, or barrel of flour respectively. 2. That, whenever the current price of rice imported into this kingdom, to be ascertained by the prices in the London market, shall be less than 35*s.* per cwt., there shall be given on every cwt. of rice imported into Great Britain before the 1st October 1800, a bounty equal to the difference between such average price and 35*s.* 3. That the duties now payable on Swedish herrings, dried or cured, imported into this kingdom, do cease and determine. 4. That the chairman be directed to move the House, that leave be given to bring in a bill to encourage the cultivation of potatoes on waste lands, for a time to be limited: And also, 5. That leave be given to bring in a bill to explain and amend an act, made in the 36th of his majesty, intituled, 'an act for the better regulation of mills;" and also, 6. That leave be given to bring in a bill for better regulating the price and assize of bread: and also, 7. That leave be given to bring in a bill to prohibit for a time to be limited, the use of wheat in making starch."

The *Speaker* commended the resolutions, and was happy to find, that one regulation was in their contemplation; namely, that when a certain quantity of corn was carried to the milier, he should be obliged to grind it as the person pleased It was his wish to remove the prejudice against brown bread. From the use of it the best prospect would be open to us. It was stated, that mixed bread was more subject to adulteration than white bread. This was an error: for it was easier to detect ingredients in brown than in white bread. Nothing was more injurious than to encourage an opinion, that the present distress arose from an artificial scarcity, and not from the dispensation of Providence. The public owed much to those who were styled monopolists: they aided the deficiency of the markets by keeping up a steady and regular supply.

Mr. *Wilberforce* said, that with regard to making use of the whole of the wheat except the coarse pollard, he was decidedly in favour of that measure; and as to a compulsory law, if it were proposed, he should give it his hearty support; for he could not suppose there could be any aversion in the people at large to partake of bread of the same quality. As to the agreement sent down from the Lords, it was not exactly such as he could approve of. A mere general recommendation to economy would not, he feared have the effect of a resolution of a committee of the whole House. Something, undoubtedly, ought to be done on the subject. He meant to-morrow to move, that the House should go into a committee to consider of means for promoting an extended growth of potatoes. The general price of that article was now three times as much as in common years. What he meant to propose was, to give moderate premiums for the cultivation of this article.

The Resolutions were agreed to.

March 7. The Resolutions being reported to the House,

Mr. *Wilberforce* rose and said, that when he assisted in forming these resolutions, he laid his account in being misrepresented, either through ignorance, inadvertency, or design. A friend had just put into his hands what was stated to be an account of what he had said in the House yesterday, and which had been grossly misrepresented. Mr. W. then read an extract from the newspaper alluded to, in which he was represented, in recommending the growth of potatoes, thus to have expressed himself: "Potatoes made men healthy, vigorous, and active; but, what is still more in their favour, they make men tall: more especially was he led to say so, as being rather under the common size, and he must lament that his guardians had not fostered him under that genial vegetable." He appealed to the House, whether the representative of a populous county ought not to be protected against such misstatements. He should not press any motion on the House, but he was anxious that his sentiments should not be misrepresented, as if he had treated with levity a subject connected with the distresses of the people.

The Resolutions were agreed to, and bills were ordered to be brought in pursuant thereto.

March 17. The House again went into the said committee, and, after a short debate, came to the following Resolutions: 1. "That whenever the average price of wheat, ascertained and published in the London Gazette, under the authority of any act or acts of parliament, shall be less than 85*s.* per quarter, there shall be given, on every quarter of wheat which shall be imported into Great Britain, from any of the ports of the Baltic, or from

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any of the ports of Germany, or any ports North of the Texel, before the 1st of October 1800, a bounty equal to the difference between such average price in the London Gazette and 85*s.* per quarter of wheat. 2. That, whenever the average price of wheat, ascertained and published in the London Gazette, under the authority of any act or acts of parliament, shall be less than 90*s.* per quarter, there shall be given, on every quarter of wheat which shall be imported into Great Britain, from the port of Archangel, before the 1st of October 1800, a bounty equal to the difference between such average price in the London Gazette and 90*s.* per quarter of wheat."

Executory Devises Restriction Bill.] March 18. The *Lord Chancellor* called the attention of their lordships to the subject of executory devises; and observed, that it was astonishing what ideas and practices obtained, and to what extent, among those who disposed of property in that way. The effect which the decision that recently took place relative to Thellusson's will had had upon persons of that description was inconceivable; and this he had had occasion frequently to learn from eminent counsel and conveyancers who were resorted to in such cases. The absurdity of such a mode of disposing of property was obvious. He was, not long since, informed by two eminent conveyancers, that they were instructed by a certain person, whose name, however, for obvious reasons, was kept secret, to frame such an executory devise of his property, as that the next heirs should not come to the enjoyment of it "during the lives of any of the present peerage of Great Britain!" To mention such a circumstance was sufficient; it spoke for itself. However, of the kind, it might not be a devise which involved the worst consequences; as the personages to whom it referred, were of public notoriety, their demises would be more easily ascertained. But, in the case of the lives of an equal number of private persons being involved, what must be the consequence? He thought that some mode should be suggested in order to counteract the effects of what had, in another place, been happily denominated "posthumous avarice." The principle upon which such persons acted, was directly hostile to that excellent one laid down by lord chancellor Nottingham, who laid it down, that such devises should be for the benefit of the families of such persons. The new mode of acting on such occasions would go, however, to starve the heirs. Some legislative provision should be resorted to, and with this view he would now bring in a bill "for declaring illegal, in future, all Trusts and Directions to be contained in Deeds or Wills, for accumulating the Profits or Produce of Real or Personal Estate, and thereby postponing, for an undue period of time, the beneficial enjoyment of the property accumulated."

The bill was read a first time.

Debate in the Lords on the Standing Order respecting Divorce Bills.] March 21. The order of the day being read, for taking into consideration the Standing Order, No. 142, respecting Divorce Bills,

Lord *Mulgrave* said, that when the standing order, for the rescinding of which he meant to move was first made, he had stated his objections to it, but his argument had been of no avail. Those sentiments, however, which he then submitted to their lordships, he still entertained, and had waited since the order had been in force with great patience, to watch the effect of it, and to see if any great good should result from means which he considered extremely bad in themselves. In the whole of his reasoning, he should confine himself to the first part of the standing order, as he could not imagine that their lordships would do so unjust a thing as to insist on a rigid enforcement of the latter part of it. The principle of the resolution, which constituted the standing order, clashed with the leading principles of the jurisprudence of England, was directly repugnant to the known and established rules of the law of evidence, and revolted every feeling of equity and justice; it being an established rule and maxim of law, that no man should be subjected to interrogatories which went to criminate himself; that, nevertheless, was precisely the operation of the standing order; for what could be the rational construction of it, but the obliging a petitioner for a divorce bill to come to their lordships' bar, and furnish proof of his own criminality? He could regard the order only as an order of suspicion—an order which implied a suspicion of the justice of the ecclesiastical courts, in which the suit for a divorce *a mensa et thoro*, had been instituted, and of the justice of the courts of Westminster-hall,

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in which the action of trespass for damages had been tried, and in each of which courts, the case had always been fairly tried, and solemn decisions given, previous to its coming under their lordships' cognizance. Inferences of suspicion, however, against the conduct of those courts were neither supported by presumption nor fact; and the high characters and known integrity of the judges and officers of each of them, ought surely to place them far above suspicion. The next point of view in which the operation of the order presented itself, was, as an unjust and general suspicion of persons applying for relief under a heavy stroke of domestic misfortune, who were more properly objects of compassion than of suspicion. Nor could he conceive how suspicion of criminality could attach to persons under such circumstances obliged to petition for a divorce. Did their lordships see cause for such suspicion, from the general tenor of the divorce cases which came before them? Let their lordships consider how painful it must be for a man of honour to have his feelings additionally wounded, by being placed at the bar of that House, and made the fixed figure for "the slow unmoving finger of scorn to point at," for the rest of his days. It was impossible to believe, that the persons who sued for divorces, were the panders of their wives adultery, without doing the most flagrant injustice to the morals of the gentry of this country? It was unjustifiable to assume, as a general suspicion, that a husband could be so lost to all sense of shame, as to become the instrument of his own disgrace. This strange suspicion must have been founded upon some idea of extraordinary sympathy between the dispositions of the parties, somewhat like that mentioned by Diodorus Siculus, to have prevailed in Corsica, where the wife being in labour, the husband took to his bed, and received caudles and broth for a certain number of days. In this case of divorces, the standing order seemed to consider the husband as under the influence of a different sympathy, by which the loss of his wife's virtue and delicacy, was immediately followed by a loss, on his part, of every feeling of honour. The object of the standing order was said to be, to deter persons from lightly or criminally making applications for divorces, by increasing the difficulties of obtaining them, with a view to prevent their marrying again, and pursuing a course of wife-traffic. But how could this end be more easily obtained by examining the injured husband than any other party? If it was deemed necessary to examine one of the parties, why not examine the lady? If the objection to examine the lady was insuperable, let the examination be held out *in terrorem* to the adulterer, and let the seducer be brought to the bar to be questioned. There could be no reason, *primâ facie*, to let all the suspicion rest on the aggrieved person.—The mode of ascertaining the truth of this general suspicion, he held to be more objectionable than the suspicion itself, because it was directly contrary to the principles and practice of the law of evidence. It was a maxim of the common law, "Nemo testis esse debet in propriâ causâ." Wingate states it as a maxim, that "the common law reputeth, a man will deal for his own best advantage; upon this ground, a party cannot be witness in his own cause, for the law presumeth he will speak for his own best advantage; and, therefore, neither should a party to an usurious contract, be admitted to be a witness against the usurer, as he thereby would become *testis in propriâ causâ.*" The inference is obvious, viz. that if in a case comparatively less than that of adultery, no man can be a legal witness in his own cause, how much more inadmissible as a witness ought a man to be, who has a palpable and direct interest in his own divorce? Blackstone lays it down, "that interested witnesses may be examined upon a *voir dire*, if suspected to be secretly concerned in the event." A *voir dire* was merely an examination as to the fact of the existing interest, but in the case of divorce under the standing order, the thing is ascertained in its fullest extent, the interest is not secret, the witness is the principal party, and, in a manner, the only one; and, therefore, that which, in the common law, is matter of examination to set the witness aside, is under this standing order, the reason for selecting him for examination. Blackstone further says, "or the interest may be proved in court, which last is the only method of supporting an objection to the former class (namely, infamous persons), for no man is to be examined to prove his own infamy." Yet, by this standing order, the petitioner for a divorce is examined to a fact, which must involve him in disgrace, if he affirm the suspicion on which he is called.

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The only remaining judicial proceeding, which was perfectly consonant to the practice of the standing order, was the purgatory oath of the canon law, by which, in criminal cases, the priests were admitted to swear to their own innocence, when accused, but they still had the cautionary, though weak, guard of the compurgators. This purgatory oath was introduced in the ancient gothic constitution of Sweden, by the clergy, in civil, as well as criminal causes. An ancient writer on the law in that country observes, that "the clergy having thereby sown a very large crop of oaths, received an ample harvest of perjuries, part of the punishment for perjury, in those times, being a heavy pecuniary fine which went to the coffers of the clergy." A practice similar to the purgatory oath formerly existed in the court of chancery of this country, but the genius and spirit of the English law drove it from that court, and a succession of legal and enlightened chancellors corrected the abuses of their ecclesiastical predecessors. The hold of this practice of the canon law upon the spiritual courts was, however, so much stronger as to require the interposition of the powerful engine of an act of parliament to displace it, and it was abolished by the 13th Charles 2nd, cap. 12. Let their lordships, therefore, seriously ask themselves, whether they were willing to revive a judicial practice, that had been exploded in rather impure times, and to introduce any thing like a similar practice into a proceeding, uniting at once, the exercise of their judicial and legislative functions? —He came next to consider the effect it would have on the person examined at their bar in a moral and religious view, and here he begged leave to appeal to the serious consideration of the right reverend prelates, whether they were willing to lend their support to the continuance of a standing order, which held out a powerful inducement to perjury? Let them for a moment turn their attention to the different effect, that the oath, imposed under the standing order, would produce on the virtuous and on the profligate, and on men, who, though they had fallen into vicious courses, had not abandoned all sense of reverence for the Almighty. Let them suppose an individual of the latter description under examination at the bar of the House. Though so far dissipated in his conduct, as to have acted in a way that sufficiently showed he was superior to shame, he might not be dead to a sense of religion; alarmed and terrified at the idea of flying in the face of his Creator, he would in all probability confess his guilt. Thus the deep sense of religion impressed on his mind would be made the test of his guilt, and his condemnation. Look again at another description of persons, and the consequence would be still worse. With some the sense of shame even superseded all regard for religion. A man of this latter description to avoid disgrace would run the hazard of perjury, In either of the two dilemmas the case was equally repugnant to the law of evidence, and to every principle of justice and morality; he could not, therefore, but earnestly press them on the consideration of the right reverend bench, and upon that of the House in general. Exclusive of the mischievous tendency of the standing order, had any good purpose resulted from it? Only three petitioners for divorce bills had been examined under its authority. and none of them had lost their bills. The more he considered the standing order, the less could he reconcile it to his judgment. He even thought the practice of the Abyssinians preferable, among whom it was recorded, that when the husband failed in conjugal fidelity, the wife was punished for neglect of duty, as the Abyssinian legislators concluded, that if a woman was as full of attentions as her duty required, the husband would not have gone astray.—His lordship then moved, "That the said Standing Order be repealed."

The Bishop of *Rochester* said, he did not rise to entertain the House with anecdotes from Abyssinia, or to attempt to follow the noble lord through the vast field of argument he had gone over. There was one point in which he cordially agreed with the noble lord, namely, that the subject in question was one of the greatest importance; but he could go with him no farther. He rose to oppose the noble lord's motion, because he was an enemy to every proceeding that made the obtainment of bills of divorce a matter of ease. He was persuaded that this was not the moment to relax in abolishing any of the checks which the wisdom of the House had placed upon divorce bills, because he was firmly convinced that the frequency of divorces was the source of all the evil that sapped the morality and manners of the people. Nothing could more effectually tend to weaken all the

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bonds and ties of virtuous society, than what went to diminish and depreciate the sanctity of marriage. They had all seen that the first step taken in a neighbouring country to break down the fences of law, religion, and morality, and to introduce that violence, insubordination and anarchy, that had over-run so many states, was the open and daring profanation of marriage sanctity. As to the idea that the noble lord had urged so strongly, that the standing order threw a suspicion on the conduct of the ecclesiastical and common law courts, it was altogether unfounded. Neither the one nor the other of those courts had the means of getting at the possible collusion between the husband, the wife, and the adulterer, which the standing order gave the House, and if the noble lord had consulted those, who, like himself, had paid particular attention to divorce bills, or had taken the opinion of professional men, they could have told him, that nothing was more common than collusion between the parties in such cases, and that, in various instances, on the score of seduction or adultery the parties had agreed to get rid of each other; and in some cases the adulterer or the lady, accommodated the husband with proof, to render the wished-for divorce easy to be obtained. In those proceedings for divorce the wife made no defence, and it was no secret, that in a divorce, a very few years back, where a man of high rank, a member of that House was implicated, the proceeding was collusive, although 3,000*l.* was the amount of the damages given by the jury.—With regard to the noble lord's arguments upon the law of evidence, not one of them was applicable to the standing order. The law of evidence had no relation to a petitioner for a divorce bill. A petitioner of that sort did not come to their bar as a criminal; he came to ask a favour, for a matter of favour it was, and not a matter of right. Divorce *à vinculo matrimonii* was unknown to our laws; there was no law whatsoever that empowered either the courts of common law, or the ecclesiastical courts to grant it. The ecclesiastical could not absolve the marriage contract *in toto*, unless it were satisfactorily established, that the marriage was *ab initio* bad. No action could be brought which could obtain it. All that the ecclesiastical or common law courts could do, was for the former to grant a divorce from bed and board, a mere separation on the parties giving bond to avoid all criminal or adulterous intercourse. The latter, the courts in Westminster-hall, could only try the fact of adultery before a jury, who were empowered to give damages proportionate to their measurement of the injury. A divorce *à vinculo matrimonii* must, therefore, be a special legislative act, originating in that House, and consequently, when a man came to that House with a petition for a divorce bill, he came to solicit a favour, and was bound to submit to such rules as the House should in its wisdom think proper to lay down, in order to guard against collusion, and this order had answered the purposes intended. The noble lord had asked, would he or his brethren throw such a stigma upon the characters of the gentry of England, who were those most likely to petition that House for divorce bills? The noble lord was extremely mistaken. Divorce bills had been applied for and obtained, not merely by the higher ranks, but even by tradesmen and mechanics. The operation of the standing order was obviously beneficial. There had been only three examinations of petitioners for divorce bills, during the two years it had been in existence; but that was a proof of its utility, as it prevented persons, who were not conscious of their purity, from risking the hazard of being examined as to collusion. There were but few instances in which the honour and purity of the husband were suspected, unless there existed *primâ facie*, strong reason for suspicion. The learned lord on the woolsack would recollect, with him, a case somewhat recent, where a member of the House had petitioned for a divorce, and his bill had even passed the second reading, when circumstances came out that proved how little claim he had for a divorce, and no noble lord ever moved that his bill should be read a third time. Collusion though a strong and insurmountable objection to a divorce bill, was not the only one. The petitioner was not entitled to his act, but upon proving that he was entitled to the domestic character of a good husband. Though great allowance, undoubtedly, was to be made, and great compassion felt for the situation of an innocent, virtuous, and deeply injured husband, who might be called to be examined at their lordships bar, all that compassion and feeling for him must yield to the paramount duty of preserving the morals of the people.—With respect to the objec-

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tions on the score of inducement to perjury, to almost every other case the same objections were applicable. In regard to the noble lord's comparison of the operation of the order, to that of the purgatory oath of the canon law, it had as little application as the other law arguments brought forward that evening. In the present case, no crime was imputed to the party. The petitioning for a divorce bill was his own act, and he was only subjected to an examination, that it might be seen, whether he was entitled to such an extraordinary favour of the legislature.

Lord *Auckland* said, that during the twenty-six years that he had been in parliament it had frequently happened to him to give particular attention to proceedings in cases of divorce: and he was not conscious that in any instance he had shown a suspicious disposition, or undue severity or a disregard to the principles of justice and of law. He had always acted towards the party injured with that delicacy which was due to family calamity and to unmerited distress. He had at the same time observed towards the other parties, that candour and moderation which ought to be maintained by every man who has not the unchristian presumption to believe himself exempt from the influence of natural passions and human infirmities. Still however, he had discharged this part of his parliamentary duty in several instances with pain, and in almost every instance with disgust. Besides, he had felt dissatisfied with the dispensation of a legislative remedy, which was not equally within the reach of all who equally stood in need of it. His principles were so well known, that he should not be suspected of a want of zeal for the privileges and distinctions which belonged to rank and property. The sad experience of many nations had recently proved to the world, that distinctions and inequalities must subsist in civil society. But rank and property could not have a claim to the exclusive benefit of divorces; and yet that benefit was confined to the higher classes by the great expense which attended it. This partial advantage was objectionable in another point of view; it tended to expose to public remark and discussion, the weaknesses and vices of men of rank and opulence, and of those who ought to give examples of good order and of morality. At any rate, if the jurisdiction were proper to be maintained by their lordships, it ought at least to be exercised with great strictness and purity. Under these impressions, far from agreeing with the noble lord, that the actual proceedings were too rigorous, he had often been inclined to take the sense of the House on a proposal to introduce a new restriction, and to make a standing order, that no bill of divorce shall be admissible without a clause to make it unlawful for the offending parties to intermarry. [A general cry of Hear, hear!]. Their lordships approbation and concurrence so strongly marked would from that moment make it his duty to mature such a provision, and to establish this new discouragement to adultery, either by a legislative act, or by the separate mode of a standing order, if it should be found necessary or thought proper. After what he had said, it seemed almost superfluous to add, that he was decidedly against rescinding the standing order. The noble lord had considered that measure, in a point of view, totally foreign to its true nature, and having suffered himself to be misled in his first principles, had been led to take positions, which no powers of reasoning or of eloquence could make tenable. A party suing for a divorce, and called upon to declare whether there existed any collusion in the case, could not, in any just sense, be compared to a criminal required to give evidence of his own innocence; and, therefore, the noble lord's reasonings were utterly inapplicable to the present case. The principle of the standing order was just, and the exercise of it had always been conducted with mildness. He hoped and trusted that it would not be rescinded. He held in abhorrence any proposal, which however unintentionally, seemed to imply an approximation towards the system of legalized prostitution and profligacy, now prevalent in a neighbouring country. Great Britain had preserved her existence amidst the paroxysms, and convulsions, and downfalls of nations, by the effect of our being a little less irreligious and less immoral than others. He hoped and trusted that parliament would steadily and zealously defend and improve those important boundaries of morality and religion, and would resist every proposal which might tend to undermine or weaken them.

Lord *Grenville* said, that although he gave his noble friend full credit for the purity of his intention, in moving to rescind the standing order, yet in times like these, when they had seen in other countries the fatal consequence of disregard of

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all laws, moral and divine, it became their lordships, so far from relaxing the rules laid down with respect to divorce bills, to draw the line of difficulty of obtaining them more strictly than ever, and therefore he must object to the motion. With regard to the measure suggested by his noble friend near him, he thought so highly of its utility, in tending effectually to guard and protect the sanctity of marriage, which he considered as the best bond of public morality and manners, that he hoped his noble friend would seriously apply himself to the subject, and bring it it forward as soon as he conveniently could.

The *Lord Chancellor* recommended lord Auckland's suggestion to the serious attention of the House, but he could not but think that the introduction of a special bill would be exposing so important an object to some risk. The noble lord might effect all that was wished by moving it as a resolution of the House, that no divorce bill should be received unless it contained such a clause. A resolution of the House undoubtedly would not be so binding as an act of parliament; but it would be binding on themselves, and that would be sufficient. In the court of session in Scotland, it was an inherent part of the practice, in cases of divorce, to inhibit the criminal parties from intermarrying.

The Bishop of *Durham* objected to the motion. From the experience of the thirty years that he had sat in that House, he might safely assert, that nine divorce bills out of ten had been founded in collusion. With regard to lord Auckland's suggestion he could not but highly approve of it, as he had himself about twenty years ago introduced a bill into that House, upon the same principle. That bill was approved by the House, but was lost in the Commons by a majority of ten or eleven only, on one of the divisions upon it.*

The motion was then negatived.

* See Vol. 20, p. 592.

END OF VOL. XXXIV.

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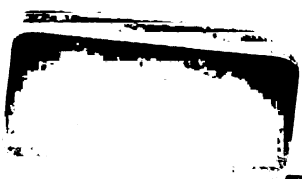

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